ESSAYS

ON THE

INSTITUTIONS,

GOVERNMENT, AND MANNERS,

OF THE

STATES OF ANCIENT GREECE.

BY

HENRY DAVID HILL, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREW'S.

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PREFACE.

THE following Essays are the substance of a part of the lectures, which for many years have been read to the more advanced students of Greek in the university of St. Andrew's, and are now published in the hope of their being useful to those, who are engaged in the study of Grecian literature. All the Greek authors make so many allusions to the government and manners of their countrymen, that, without a knowledge of these particulars, many easy passages will seem obscure or unintelligible.

In presuming to lay this work before the public, I am very far from undervaluing the admirable picture of Greece exhibited in the travels of the younger Anacharsis: but some of these Essays treat of subjects which did not enter into the plan of the ingenious author of that delightful production: in others, various particulars are illustrated in a manner considerably different from his; and to the young, for whom this work is chiefly intended, perhaps the direct mode of instruction may be more useful, though less amusing than the form in which he has conveyed it.

In the first Essay, I have endeavoured to assist my readers in the perusal of Homer, by delineating the state of society during the heroic ages. In the five next, I have treated of those institutions in which all the Greeks took an equal interest; and have afterwards attempted to illustrate the government and manners of the more eminent States of Greece. The literature of the Greeks being the subject of the course of lectures which in future I propose to give in the University to which I belong, I have not entered on this interesting subject; but the old and middle comedy of the Athenians cast so much light on their situation and character, that I have thought it necessary to give my readers some idea of the nature of so curious a species of composition.

It will yield me much satisfaction, if my humble endeavours shall in any degree contribute to facilitate or to promote the study of the authors of ancient Greece. Besides the tendency of their writings to refine the taste, and to foster sentiments of liberty and independence, no human productions are more calculated to amend the heart, and form it to the love and the practice of virtue. So amiable are the colours in which virtue is painted in their compositions; so captivating are the examples of magnanimity, heroism, and generosity, to which they perpetually allude, that he who peruses them must insensibly imbibe somewhat of the exalted spirit which they breathe, and through life will probably be regulated by those principles of honour and integrity, which they had taught him to revere.

During some ages, the affairs of Persia were so interwoven with those of Greece, and form the subject of so many allusions in the Grecian authors, that I have deemed it essential to subjoin an Essay on the government, manners, and religion of the ancient Persians.

ERRATA.

Page 20, line 9, *for* caused it be, *read* caused it to be.
171, 9, *for* νομοθετα and ευθονει, *read* νομοθεται and ευθυνει.

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ESSAYS.

ESSAY I.

ON THE HEROIC AGES.

Small extent of the states into which, during the heroic ages, Greece was divided. Form of government which then prevailed. Inconsiderable power of the kings. At that period the Greeks possessed little military skill; but displayed uncommon magnanimity. Though distinguished by great ferocity of manners, they exhibited the warmest attachment to their friends, and unbounded hospitality to strangers. Conceptions which they entertained of the gods, and of a future state. Private life of the early Greeks. Situation of women. Nature of their entertainments. State of the arts, and of the Greek language.

THE heroic ages may be considered as comprehending the space which elapsed from the arrival of Pelops in Greece to the death of Codrus, that illustrious King of Athens who sacrificed his life for his country. The history of this period is blended with fable; but the state of society can be learned from the poems of Homer; and, besides the light which an acquaintance with it throws on innumerable passages in his writings, it is so curious in itself, and in many respects so different from that which afterwards subsisted in Greece, as to be deserving of particular attention.

During the heroic ages, Greece was divided into a number of states completely independent of each other. Most of them consisted of a few miles of territory surrounding the city in which was the seat of government; and with the exception of the dominions of Agamemnon, and a few other princes, even those celebrated by Homer for their power and extent were great only in comparison of the rest. The government of all these states was nearly the same. In each of them there was a king, who acted as the leader of his people in war, and their judge in peace; but who in other respects was possessed of very little power. Before transacting any affair of state, he was bound to consult a council composed of the most respectable of the citizens; and laws were enacted, and war declared, not by his authority, but by that of an assembly, in which every individual capable of bearing arms was entitled to be present, and where the majority of voices determined the decision. In these governments then, the king, with great appearance of power, was entirely at the mercy of the people, and by a single vote could at any time be deposed from the sovereignty, and banished from the state.

The small extent of these principalities prevented the kings from making any addition to their power. In an entensive kingdom, many encroachments on the rights of the people pass unopposed, because they are known only to a part of the community, and because a few individuals will seldom venture to resist the will of the sovereign, while unacquainted with the sentiments of the rest of their fellow citizens. In small states, on the contrary, every act of oppression immediately excites a general discontent and indignation; and men oppose it with vigour, because they are assured of support. During the heroic ages, accordingly, any violation of the established laws never failed to prove fatal to those sovereigns who dared to attempt it. So intimately connected with each other were all the members of the community, and so much were they impressed with the importance of mutual support, that in those days princes were often seen wandering through Greece in indigence and misery, whom, in consequence of some act of tyranny or injustice, their subjects had chosen to dethrone.

War was the chief employment of the early Greeks, and eminence in it the sole ground of distinction. The ardour with which they hunted the wild animals, then abounding in the woods of Greece, and engaged in the athletic exercises that occupied their leisure, did not so much arise from the amusement which these employments were qualified to yield, as from their effect in preparing them for the hardships and dangers of the field. Every man was supposed to be bred to war. In the levies made for the military expeditions, in which, for a part of the year, they were generally engaged, each family was required to furnish a soldier, and the lot determined which of the family was to serve.

During the heroic ages the Greek armies received no pay, and every man was obliged to furnish his own arms and provisions. In compensation for this expense, he obtained his share of the plunder, which, being put into a common stock, was divided at stated times among all of whom the army was composed. Besides a right to the largest portion, the king might except from the division any part of the plunder which he had vowed to the gods, or had promised as a reward of the valour of any individual. It is to this practice that Virgil alludes when, in the ninth book of the Æneid, he makes Ascanius say to Nisus:—

> Vidisti, quo Turnus equo, quibus ibat in armis
> Aureus; ipsum illum clypeum, cristasque rubentis
> Excipiam sorti, jam nunc tua præmia, Nise.
> Æn. ix. 269—271.

In war, the power of the king was subject to limitations of the same kind as in peace. While in battle, he could punish with death any person guilty of disobedience or of cowardice: but at all other times he was under the control of the different councils mentioned in the Iliad of Homer. The first of these was composed of every soldier in the army. It might be called by any of the chiefs, and was opened by a speech from him who had summoned it, stating the point which he wished to bring under its review. In this assembly there reigned the utmost freedom of debate. Every soldier was entitled to deliver his opinion; and his vote was of equal force with that of the greatest of the chiefs. Of this council there is an example in the first book of the Iliad, when Achilles assembled the army to deliberate concerning the means of averting the pestilence which then raged in the Grecian camp; and in the ninth book, when Agamemnon, disheartened by the defeat of the Greeks, proposed that they should abandon the siege of Troy.

If the suddenness of any emergency rendered it impossible to assemble this general council, the commander was accustomed to summon all the chiefs in the army, and to ask their advice respecting the measures which he ought to pursue. Of this kind was the council in the tenth book, when the camp of the Greeks was besieged by the Trojans.

The third council was composed of the oldest and most experienced of the chiefs; and was assembled, either to deliberate concerning affairs which it was necessary to conduct with unusual secrecy and dispatch, or to prepare matters for the discussion of a general council. In all these assemblies Agamemnon seems to have possessed no other distinction than that of acting as president, and was obliged to follow the opinion of the majority.

During the heroic ages, the Greeks appear to have been almost totally ignorant of the art of war. Troy was not surrounded with a ditch, and its walls were of a moderate height, yet no attempt was ever made to scale them. They were never even invested by the Grecian army, whose camp was at the distance of several miles from the city; and in consequence, supplies of provisions and troops arrived in safety during the whole of the siege. The Greeks brought with them a number of horses; but used them only in chariots, a kind of force far inferior to cavalry. Two, three, and sometimes four horses were used in a chariot. Of two persons who rode in it, only one could fight, the other being employed in directing the horses; and though these machines were sometimes formidable in a plain, the intervention of uneven ground, of a ditch, or of a wood, rendered them not only useless, but dangerous, to the army to which they belonged. The early Greeks had no military instruments, nor any device like the colours of a modern army; and, when so much scattered as to be beyond the reach of the voice of their leaders, must have suffered much inconveniency from their ignorance of these simple inventions. In leading on to battle, even the greatest warriors were strangers to those evolutions, and that skilful arrangement of troops, by which, in our times, a general adds so much to the effect of his attack. The army advanced in a deep phalanx. On coming near the enemy, all rushed impetuously to the combat. Every man chose his adversary, and continued to fight with him till superior strength, or skill in arms, decided the victory. After the commencement of the battle, the generals sought only to set an example of valour to their troops, fought in the same manner as their soldiers, and by their single prowess often contributed to turn the fortune of the day.

It was in military skill alone that the early Greeks were deficient. In valour they have not been surpassed by any nation whatever. Their education had so inured them to hardship and fatigue, and eminence in war led to so many flattering distinctions, that all rejoiced in being led out to the field, and many displayed the most heroic magnanimity. Innumerable examples of this heroism are to be found in the poems of Homer, who probably lived so near the period of which he wrote, that he either recorded events which had actually happened, or painted manners similar to those which then prevailed. In the seventeenth book of the Iliad, the Grecian chiefs find themselves involved in so thick a mist, as to be unable either to direct their weapons, or avoid the assault of the enemy. In this situation, Ajax prays,

> Ζευ πατερ, αλλα συ ῥυσαι ὑπ' ηερος ὑιας Αχαιων·
> Ποιησον δ' αιθρην, δος δ' οφθαλμοισιν ιδεσθαι·
> Εν δε φαει και ολεσσον— Il. xvii. 645—647.

words in which he does not pray for life, but only that he may have an opportunity of dying like a warrior. It was decreed by the fates that Achilles should perish if he went to the siege of Troy. His mother, a sea goddess, used many entreaties to pursuade him to remain at home, and assured him that in this case he would enjoy a long and peaceful reign. Achilles, however, remained inexorable; he thought that life was not worth the enjoying, if unaccompanied with military fame, and that an early death would be amply compensated by the glory of being the greatest warrior at Troy. This magnanimity, which then formed a feature in the character of every Grecian chief, has given to these ages the name of heroic.

At that early period, the state of society was exceedingly rude. The right of property seems to have been understood; but was so little respected, that robbery universally prevailed. Arms were worn by every individual, not merely when abroad, but even at table, and in the midst of his family, because he always had reason to dread that an attempt might unexpectedly be made to murder himself, and carry his children into captivity. Robbery was not only common, but does not seem to have been attended with any degree of infamy. In returning to Ithaca, the wise Ulysses, who had gone to Troy to avenge the wrongs of Menelaus, did not think it inconsistent with his character to plunder two cities with which he had no ground of quarrel; and when his son Telemachus came with Mentor to the court of Nestor, that prince, after entertaining them kindly, asked them, as a matter of curiosity, whether they were travellers or robbers. The constant wars in which the Greeks were then engaged, and the state of hostility in which they often lived, even with their countrymen, inspired them with an uncommon ferocity of manners. Not content with the death of their enemies, they delighted in exercising the most shocking indignities on their remains. In the twenty-second book of the Iliad, Achilles regrets that he cannot devour the body of Hector; and on another occasion, the same prince, with his own hand, sacrificed twelve young Trojans over the funeral pile of Patroclus.

These acts of cruelty were not peculiar to Achilles. From the speech in which Priam beseeches Hector not to engage in single combat with Achilles, and from one of Hector himself in his last interview with Andromache, it appears that the slavery or murder of every citizen of Troy was the consequence expected from its being taken. The event showed too clearly that these apprehensions had not been unfounded. Astyanax, the infant son of Hector, was thrown headlong from a tower by Ulysses. The venerable Priam was butchered even at the altar by Pyrrhus; and Hecuba, the Queen of Troy, was chained as a slave at the gate of Agamemnon.

In all this there happened nothing which was considered as uncommon. On the capture of every city, as well as of Troy, the conquerors exhibited scenes of bloodshed and horror which are rarely to be witnessed among the most savage tribes of barbarians.

When we survey these features in the character and manners of the early Greeks, we are apt to imagine that they must have been insensible to every feeling of affection or humanity; but this was far from being the case. The principle of benevolence is too deeply rooted in the human mind to be eradicated by any set of manners, and always has some objects on which to exert its power. The same violence of temper, displayed in the most deadly hatred to their enemies, endeared to them those with whom they were connected. Almost every Grecian chief had some friend who was his constant companion; and Achilles and Patroclus, Pylades and Orestes, Theseus and Pirithöus, are among the few examples of unreserved and disinterested friendship recorded in history.

In the domestic relations of life, the conduct of the early Greeks was alike meritorious. Parents watched with affection and care over the education of their children, and considered them as the greatest blessing which the gods could bestow.

Before the siege of Troy, Priam was esteemed happy in having fifty sons; and in the ninth book of the Iliad, Phœnix relates that his father, exasperated at some offence which he had given him, expressed his indignation by wishing that he might never have upon his knees a child to lisp to him the name of father. Children were in no respect deficient in repaying the tenderness of their parents. Their respect for them approached to veneration. The fiercest heroes submitted without reluctance to every injunction of a father; and seem to have felt less satisfaction from the glory which they themselves acquired by their exploits, than from the joy which they occasioned to him. The recollection of the old age and helplessness of Peleus melted to pity even the unrelenting spirit of Achilles, and made him grant to the prayers of the still more unfortunate Priam the melancholy consolation of performing the last honours to the remains of his son.

It was not merely to their family and friends that the early Greeks confined their benevolence. Their hospitality was unbounded. From the moment that a stranger entered their threshold, he became the object of their care. For several days they entertained him without even inquiring into his history; and if he was found to be not unworthy of their attention, an alliance of hospitality was formed with him, and was afterwards regarded as indissoluble. This alliance descended even to their children; and accordingly in the field of battle, Glaucus and Diomed desisted from the single combat which they were about to begin, and sware unalterable friendship, because their remote ancestors had exchanged the tokens of hospitality. This hospitality, which they practised in common with many unpolished nations, had probably originated from pity for the helpless situation in which, during so rude a state of society, strangers would otherwise have been placed, and was supported by a stronger principle. From the same motive of compassion, the early Greek poets had represented hospitality as particularly acceptable to the gods, and as a duty which it was dangerous to neglect, since even the greatest divinities sometimes visited the earth under the appearance of men.

Nothing could exceed the extravagance and absurdity of the religious opinions of the Greeks. The multitude of their gods was immense. Hesiod computes the number to be not less than thirty thousand; and when we consider that every mountain and river and wood was supposed to be under the protection of some superior being, his computation will not appear excessive. Though most of the gods are represented by the Greek poets as stained with crimes of the blackest dye, they were not believed to approve, in men, of the vices in which they themselves were accustomed to indulge. Any great violation of justice or humanity was supposed to incur their displeasure, while the brave and the virtuous were considered as the objects of their care. It is curious that the unworthy conceptions which the Greeks entertained of their gods did not prevent them from being the objects of reverence—no enterprize was undertaken without imploring their protection. Their favour was thought to confer the most distinguished honour; and the chief glory of success was always attributed to them. The Greeks believed in a future state; but during the heroic ages they do not seem to have supposed that any rewards were there bestowed on the virtuous. Those, who while on earth had enjoyed in the highest degree the favour of the gods, are represented by Homer as dissatisfied with their situation after death; and in the Odyssey, Achilles informs Ulysses that he would rather live in the meanest situation on earth than be doomed to continue in the shades below.

In the private life of the early Greeks we find the utmost simplicity of manners. The children of the greatest princes were often employed in tending the flocks of their parents; and Achilles is represented as slaying with his own hands the animal which was to serve as food to his guests. During the heroic ages men were strangers to all the refinements of luxury, and all the arts by which their posterity studied to gratify the taste; the roasted flesh of the larger animals, together with bread, being then the sole articles of food. There is no passage, either in Homer, or in any ancient writer, from which it appears that venison or birds, or even vegetables and fruit, ever formed a part of their entertainments. The sea coast of Greece abounds in fish, and yet they were held in so little estimation, that in the Odyssey Menelaus mentions as a proof of the hardships which he encountered in returning from Troy, that he and his companions were obliged to sup one night upon fish. The early Greeks ate twice a-day. In the morning, their repast was always sparing. In the evening they thought themselves at liberty to eat and drink more freely; but even then deemed it indecorous and irreligious to carry the pleasures of the table to excess. After supper, the Greeks, who at all periods of their history were passionately fond of music, commonly sang a hymn in honour of some god or hero; and for the purpose of beginning this hymn, and also for celebrating their own exploits or those of their ancestors, princes kept an αοιδος or bard. At the public entertainments of the kings or commanders in chief, it was customary to discuss any important affair of state or of war, and to bestow rewards of a singular kind upon valour. On one occasion, Agamemnon expresses his satisfaction with the conduct of Ajax, by placing before him a larger portion of meat than was allotted to the rest of the guests, and on another encourages Idomeneus to display his usual gallantry in the field, by the promise of the largest and fullest cup of any in the feast.

In the heroic ages, the situation of women was similar to that in which they are often found in an unpolished state of society. They were treated with attention and kindness; but were not admitted to the entertainments of the men, and were expected to confine their attention to domestic concerns. Homer makes the amiable Hector conclude his last speech to Andromache with advising her to mind only the cares of her family; and Telemachus, who in the Odyssey is represented as a pattern of filial affection, replies to some advice of his mother by advising her to mind the distaff and the spindle, since affairs of state were the concern only of men.

In so rude a state of society it is not probable that much improvement had been made in the arts; and accordingly, though some of the ornaments and manufactures mentioned by Homer display considerable skill and ingenuity, the poet takes care to inform us that they had either been brought from Phœnicia, or were the work of Sidonian artists residing in Greece. From a very early period, iron seems to have been known to the Greeks; but from their use of brass or copper in the manufacture of offensive arms, there can be little doubt that during the heroic ages the art of extracting it from its ore was imperfectly known. In consequence of the scarcity of iron, the plough was then made only of wood; and all other mechanical instruments appear to have been equally defective.

The art of writing, the foundation of all our knowledge in science, was either unknown to the early Greeks, or was practised only by a few. The treaties and stipulations mentioned by Homer are accompanied with many ceremonies, and with a solemn appeal to the gods; but are nowhere said to be reduced to writing. Much care seems also to have been employed in rearing monuments to those who fell in war. On all of them it was customary to place symbolical emblems of the profession of those in whose honour they were erected; but we never read of any inscription in praise of the deceased, nor even of any engraving of their names. An oar is placed over the tomb of Elpenor to denote his skill in navigation; and the arms of Patroclus are erected on the hillock reared to his memory, to mark that he had been distinguished in war. If then it be true that Cadmus brought the letters into Greece, they must have been known only to a few inquisitive individuals, and had not yet found their way into general use. In the sixth book of the Iliad, indeed, Bellerophon is said to have carried σῆματα to Prœtus; but this is a general expression denoting any kind of marks, and may signify paintings or hieroglyphics, as well as what are now denominated letters.

Notwithstanding the rudeness of the heroic ages, the Greek language had even then attained to a high degree of refinement. Not to mention the poems of Orpheus and Musæus, of the language of which Plato speaks in terms of commendation, Homer probably flourished long before the reign of Codrus. From the constant coincidence, indeed, of his view of manners with those which prevailed during the Trojan war; from a passage in the Iliad, in which he insinuates that he lived at the same time with the grand-children of Æneas; and in particular from his making no allusion to the return of the Heraclidæ, which happened eighty years after the taking of Troy, there can be little doubt that he flourished only about sixty years after the events which he describes. The Attic dialect, as exhibited in the writings of Sophocles, Demosthenes, and Plato, is unquestionably the most finished form of the Greek language; but even in Homer, how admirable does its structure appear! To the melody of the Italian, to the force and energy of the Latin tongue, it adds unrivalled copiousness, variety, and elegance. It would be pleasing to trace the steps by which, during the turbulence of the heroic ages, the Greek tongue became so far superior to the eastern languages from which it was formed; but unfortunately this is an investigation which no ancient writer has supplied us with any means of pursuing.

⁂ With the exception of a few particulars mentioned by Pausanias and Strabo, all our information respecting the heroic ages is derived from the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer. In Feithii Antiquitates Homericæ, which Gronovius has inserted in the 6th vol. of his Thesaur. Græc. Antiq. the reader will find a very great number of extracts from Homer arranged under the different heads which they serve to illustrate.

ESSAY II.

ON THE ORACLE AT DELPHI.

Circumstances which gave rise to Oracles in Greece. Situation of Delphi peculiarly fitted to cherish a belief of the presence of some divinity. Magnificence of the temple there erected to Apollo. Immense value of the offerings presented to the god. Employment of the inferior ministers of the temple. Of the Προφηται. Of the Pythiæ. Arts by which the priests caused it be believed that Apollo inspired the Pythia with the knowledge of future events. Means used to obtain information respecting the situation and character of those who consulted the Oracle. Ambiguity and obscurity of its answers. Pernicious effects of a belief of its inspiration. Causes of the decline of its credit in Greece. Period when it became silent.

IN every age, men have been desirous of obtaining information respecting the events which were afterwards to befall them. It is not merely curiosity which prompts this desire. Regardless of the wisdom of Providence in concealing the knowledge of futurity, they wish to anticipate the joy of prosperity, and to avert the evils which threaten them before the time of their approach. At an early period of the history of Greece, some priests formed a design of turning to their own advantage this passion of the human heart. They represented the gods whom they served as willing to communicate the knowledge of future events to those who approached them with suitable expressions of devotion, and took upon themselves the office of conveying this information to such as were desirous of obtaining it. A practice so much calculated to increase the wealth and importance of the priesthood was soon generally adopted. The ancient writers make mention of several hundred oracles established in different parts of Greece, and even lead us to imagine that there were few temples in which they were not occasionally delivered.

Of all these, none was so eminent as the Oracle at Delphi. Other oracles were consulted by the inhabitants of certain states or districts. To this men resorted, not only from the whole of Greece, but from every quarter of the world. The Supreme Council of Greece regarded the superintendence of it as one of the most honourable of its privileges; and so sacred was it esteemed, that a neglect of the respect to which it was supposed to be entitled, brought ruin upon more than one of the states of Greece. The subject of the following essay is to illustrate the most important particulars respecting this curious display of Grecian superstition.

On the declivity of one of the sides of Parnassus, a mountain which divided the district of Phocis from that of Locris, was a cavern, whence issued a strong sulphureous vapour, producing a powerful influence on the senses of those who approached it. Soon after its being accidentally discovered, the priests in the neighbourhood formed the design of rendering it subservient to the support of superstition. To those accordingly who flocked from every quarter to observe its effects, they represented the phrenzy occasioned by the vapour as the effect of prophetic enthusiasm, and the incoherent words uttered by those who came near it as an infallible prediction of future events. A temple was immediately reared around it; and a tradition having prevailed that there Apollo killed the monster Python, it came to be considered as sacred to him.* The situation of the temple of Delphi, and of the city gradually built on the little plain which surrounded it, contributed to the reverence with which the Oracle was regarded. Above them rose the towering cliffs of Parnassus;† below lay the rugged mountain Cirpheis and the rapid stream of Plistus, while on each side they were encompassed by a steep and almost inaccessible precipice. When entering the narrow passage which led to the temple, the beholder was fixed in pleasing astonishment by the picturesque and romantic objects around him; and the innumerable echoes which the slightest sound brought from the adjoining rocks kept alive that secret terror which a belief of the presence of the god had a tendency to inspire. The temple, which had at first been built of very course materials, being accidentally burnt, the Amphictyons, to whom the superintendence of it belonged, collected 300 talents (67,500*l.*) from the different states of Greece, and allotted this

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* From a passage of Ælian, it appears that the Oracle was first sacred to the divinity Γῆ, or the earth.

† In the First Canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Lord

Byron has painted the appearance of Parnassus with the vivid and accurate colouring which distinguishes his poems:

> "And thou, Parnassus! whom I now survey,
> Not in the phrenzy of a dreamer's eye,
> Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
> But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky
> In the wild pomp of mountain majesty."

In the following beautiful lines, he afterwards alludes to the Oracle at Delphi.

> "Though *here* no more Apollo haunts his grot,
> Some gentle spirit still pervades the spot,
> Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the cave,
> And glides with glassy foot o'er yon melodious wave."

sum for rebuilding it. The Alcmæonidæ, an illustrious Athenian family, who had been banished from their country by Pisistratus, and were then residing at Delphi, superintended the erection of it; and, with the view of interesting the Grecian states in their behalf, expended a considerable part of their fortune on its decoration. When finished, the temple bore ample testimony to the taste and judgment of the Alcmæonidæ. The front was of the most beautiful marble, and the whole edifice displayed an elegance and magnificence which even the works of Phidias were scarcely thought to surpass.

The wealth, which in the course of ages had been amassed at Delphi, was immense. Every nation, and even every individual, who had received a favourable answer from the Oracle, or who by the fancied interposition of Apollo had experienced any signal success, or had escaped any impending misfortune, thought themselves obliged to make some offering in testimony of their gratitude; and from ostentation, still more than from piety, vied with each other in the costliness of the gifts which they bestowed. There was hardly a state in Greece, by which at different times considerable donations had not been presented; and the offerings of the kings of Lydia alone were computed to have exceeded a million sterling. The quantity of gold deposited in the temple at Delphi was thought to be greater than could have been found through all the rest of Greece, and by some was supposed to equal what belonged to the Persian king. Certain it is, that during the sacred war, the Phocians plundered the temple of 10,000 talents, or 2,250,000*l.* and were far from having exhausted the treasure which it contained.

Over the gate of the temple were written these words, "Let no one enter here, whose hands are unclean;" and in the inner court of it were inscribed many maxims of the wise men of Greece, which the god was thought to hold forth for the instruction of his votaries. Among these were *Μηδεν αγαν*, *Ne quid nimis;* *Γνωθι σεαυτον*, 'Know thyself;' and 'Misfortune will soon overtake you.' One inscription, consisting of the single word Ει, has exercised the ingenuity of the learned. It was probably intended to mean, 'Thou art,' expressing in this sublime and elegant manner the vanity and uncertainty of human life, and the majesty and eternity of that Divine Being who alone can truly be said to exist.

The multitude of persons engaged in the service of the temple was great, and seems to have comprehended all the free inhabitants of Delphi.

Many of these assisted at the sacrifices and processions perpetually performing in honour of the god. Others were employed in cleansing the temple; in fixing on different parts of it chaplets of laurel, the tree sacred to Apollo; in keeping alive the sacred fire which continually burned before the altar; or in besprinkling it with water from the neighbouring stream of Castalia: and numbers in attending the strangers who came to consult the Oracle; in showing them the various donations presented to the god; in impressing their minds with a deep veneration for his power and wisdom, and in collecting information respecting their character and designs.

All these inferior ministers of the god were subject to the *προφηται*, or priests, a class of men composed of the principal citizens of Delphi, and held in such reverence by the Greeks as to be esteemed a part of the family of Apollo. The *προφηται* had the power of fixing the number of sacrifices to be offered by those who wished to consult the Oracle; of determining the time when they were to receive an answer from the god; of granting to whom they chose the different offices about the temple; and of regulating every thing which concerned its internal administration.

From the first establishment of the Oracle, women were appointed to receive the inspiration supposed to proceed from the cavern, either because the vapour produced a more violent effect on the delicate frame of the female sex, or because they could more safely be employed as dupes of the imposture of the priests. It was required that their manners should be irreproachable; but care was taken that they were totally illiterate, and possessed little acuteness, or depth of understanding. At first there was only one Pythia. In consequence of the multitude who flocked to consult the Oracle, their number was afterwards increased to three; and the god, who for some ages could be consulted only during one month in spring, consented to communicate the knowledge of futurity one day in every month of the year.

At other times, no person was allowed to approach the cavern, and the Pythiæ were not permitted even to enter the temple. It was on one of these occasions that Alexander the Great came to consult the Oracle. Unaccustomed to opposition, he was exasperated at not obtaining an immediate answer from the god, and went to the cell of one of the Pythiæ to drag her instantly to the temple. Finding it necessary to obey him, the priestess made no farther resistance, saying, "My son, you are invincible." Alexander accepted the omen, and declared that he wished for no other oracle.

To give a greater air of solemnity to the consultation of the Oracle, and perhaps to increase the effects of the vapour on the Pythia, various ceremonies were observed before she was placed above the cavern. For three days, she was made to abstain almost entirely from food. Before entering the temple, she bathed in the fountain of Castalia, drank a quantity of its cold and limpid water, and ate some leaves of the laurel sacred to Apollo. On her approaching the temple, the most fragrant perfumes were diffused around her; a laurel at the gate was made to tremble, and even the fabrick itself seemed to shake. These appearances being supposed to betoken the approbation of the god, she was led by the προφηται into the sanctuary, and was there placed on a tripod or hollow seat erected above the cavern. No words can paint the frenzy with which in a few moments she was agitated. Her colour changed; her hair stood on end; and her whole frame began to tremble. Being unable to escape from the tripod on which she was held by the priests, she tore her hair, and filled the whole temple with her shrieks. In the interval of the paroxysms of her frenzy, she uttered some unconnected words, which, being written by the priests in the presence of those who were consulting the Oracle, were inserted in what was delivered to them afterwards as the answer of the god.

No situation could be conceived more dreadful than that of the wretched women employed as Pythiæ. So violent was the agitation occasioned by the vapour, that its effects continued for several days, and were sometimes followed by death. Of consequence, it was always with unwillingness that they entered the temple, and force was generally used to make them mount the tripod.

From what has been said, it appears that the frenzy of the Pythiæ was the effect of a physical cause, and was employed by the priests to give an appearance of probability to the imposture which they practised. It was no small object which they had in view, by carrying on this delusion. Besides the veneration with which as ministers of Apollo they were generally regarded, the innumerable victims sacrificed to the god became their property, and at least a part of the offerings of his votaries might, without suspicion of fraud, be converted to their use. With respect to the answers given by the oracle, and still thought by some to evince the agency of some supernatural power, it might be sufficient to observe that their authenticity is far from being exactly ascertained. Many of them are related by historians noted for credulity; were delivered in those rude periods of society when men are fond of the marvellous, and incapable of investigating truth; and bear every mark of having been invented by the priests to spread the fame, and support the credit, of the oracle. It is not necessary, however, to have recourse to any such explication of the answers of Apollo at Delphi. Even the best of them might have been given by the priests; and far from being surprised at a few instances in which these predictions seem to have been justified by the event, we ought rather to wonder that in innumerable instances their falsehood was apparent.

The strangers who came to Delphi were not allowed to consult the Oracle immediately after their arrival. It was requisite that many sacrifices should be offered to the god, and that certain appearances, which were always in the power of the priests, should previously be exhibited by the victims. In consequence of this, the προφηται deferred as long as they chose the time at which every individual was to consult the Oracle, and in the interval seldom failed to obtain from himself or his attendants complete information respecting every thing which concerned him. By means of the knowledge thus acquired by the priests, there were many cases in which, with little danger of mistake, they could predict what was to happen to those by whom the Oracle was consulted. The success of a war will generally depend on the comparative power and resources of the contending parties. The event of any transaction in private life will commonly follow as a consequence from the character and situation of those who are engaged in it. Is it surprising then, that an acquaintance with these particulars, joined to a moderate degree of discernment, sometimes enabled the priests to foretell the effects with which they were attended? In those cases in which the event was doubtful, or could not be foreseen by human wisdom, the προφηται were accustomed to employ an artful ambiguity of expression, making use of words to which, if necessary, they could affix a very different sense from that in which they were taken by those to whom the responses had been given. When Crœsus, King of Lydia, declared war against Cyrus, King of Persia, it was not easy to determine which would be victorious; but from the character of these princes, and still more from the manners of the age, there was little doubt that the contest would occasion the ruin of one of the parties.

Having consulted the Oracle at Delphi, Crœsus received for answer, that by making war against Cyrus, he would destroy a mighty kingdom. Crœsus understood this to be a prediction that he was to conquer Persia; but the words of the Oracle certainly admitted of the other sense, which, after his defeat and captivity, was affixed to them by the priests, that the empire fated to be destroyed was his own.

Before Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, passed over into Italy to make war against the Romans, he consulted the Oracle respecting the success of his undertaking, and is said to have received a response expressed in this Latin verse:

> Aio te, Æacida, Romanos vincere posse.

When, some years after, he was forced to abandon Italy and return with ignominy to Epirus, he complained of the falsehood of the Oracle; but was told that though he had chosen to refer to himself the terms *vincere posse*, they might with equal propriety be applied to *Romanos*, and that this was the sense which the god had meant to convey.

It is curious to remark the variety of acceptations of which some answers of the Oracle admitted, and consequently the art of the priests in devising them. Before the Emperor Trajan set out on his last expedition against the Parthians, he wished to learn from the Oracle at Delphi whether it would be successful. On this, as on many other occasions, the answer was symbolical, and was communicated by sending to Trajan a branch of a vine cut into a number of pieces. This oracle, says a contemporary writer, " was most remarkably fulfilled, since Trajan died during this expedition, and his bones were brought back to Rome." Had he conquered the Parthians, however, or been subdued by them; had he lost a part of his army, or been abandoned by his allies; in all these cases, the fulfilment of the oracle would have been represented as equally obvious, and would probably have excited the same admiration.

The oracles were far from being always distinguished by similar ingenuity. On many occasions, they were enveloped in total darkness, and conveyed no idea whatever; but so far were the Greeks sunk in superstition, that even then they did not perceive the imposture of the priests. They employed their ingenuity to discover, in the prediction, some distant allusion to the event; and when this attempt was vain, they only lamented that the god did not condescend to adapt his words to the weak understanding of his votaries.

The imposture of the Oracle at Delphi is still more apparent from the many cases, in which its answers were known to have been gained by corruption, and were contrived by the priests to serve the interest or ambition of those by whom it was consulted. It was formerly mentioned, that the Alcmæonidæ not only superintended the building of the temple, but spent a considerable part of their fortune in adding to its magnificence. By these services, and, perhaps, by others of a more private nature, they gained the favour of the priests, and persuaded them to declare to the Spartans, as often as that people consulted the Oracle, that none of their designs would be successful till they had delivered Athens from the tyranny of Hippias. At first, the Lacedæmonians disregarded this declaration; but being the most superstitious nation in Greece, they were alarmed by the frequency of its repetition; and having waged war with Hippias, though then their ally, had restored Athens to liberty before detecting the artifice of the Alcmæonidæ and the imposture of the Oracle.

Cleomenes, a king of Sparta, was jealous of the ability and virtue of his colleague Demaratus, and formed a design to deprive him of the crown. With this intention, he maintained, in an assembly of the people of Sparta, that Demaratus was a supposititious son of the late king Aristo, and appealed for the truth of this assertion to the decision of the Oracle at Delphi. Being bribed by Cleomenes, the priests gave sentence against Demaratus, and obliged him to leave his country and take refuge in Persia.

Philip of Macedon was aware of the power of superstition over the minds of the Greeks, and by various arts had rendered the priests at Delphi entirely subservient to his designs. The Athenians being alarmed by some answers which they had received from the Oracle, Demosthenes, in one of his orations, publicly declared that their fears were groundless, since the Pythia philippized. It is unnecessary to dwell on the pernicious tendency of the reverence entertained by the Greeks for the Oracle at Delphi, while under the direction of men who thus were capable of ministering to the success of the enemy of their country. Sometimes, indeed, the corruption of the priests was productive of beneficial effects; but if it contributed to give authority to the institutions of Lycurgus, and to restore liberty to Athens, it also unjustly deprived Demaratus of his crown, and during the sacred war plunged the peaceful and happy Phocians in wretchedness and desolation.

About the time of the conquest of Greece by the Romans, the Oracle of Delphi began to lose the influence which for many ages it had retained over the minds of the Greeks, and never afterwards regained its former eminence. Several causes contributed to produce this effect. The wars and negotiations in which, while independent, the Greeks were perpetually engaged, gave constant employment to the Oracle; and, by the importance of the questions referred to its decision, contributed to its authority and reputation. After becoming subject to the Romans, Greece on the contrary ceased to be the theatre of any important contests, and, instead of political intrigues and wars, the inhabitants employed themselves in the pursuits of commerce, the amusements of the theatre, and the study of literature and philosophy. Even in their private concerns, the Greeks no longer felt the same eagerness to consult the Oracle at Delphi. The Romans, though in other respects abundantly superstitious, had never felt much reverence for oracles; and the contempt with which they regarded them soon extended itself in some degree to those whom they had vanquished. Another cause had a still greater influence in lessening the estimation of oracles in Greece. No sooner had philosophy been studied by the Grecian youth, than many perceived their imposture; but from timidity, or a regard to public opinion, made no open profession of their sentiments. At length, however, arose the sect of the Epicureans, who declared open hostility against every kind of superstition, and, in particular, ceased not to ridicule the wretchedness of the verses in which the oracles were delivered, the obscurity and inconsistency of their responses, the vices and corruption of the priests by whom they were communicated; and in these sarcasms mingled so much reason as well as wit, that their opinions soon became prevalent in Greece.

The Oracle at Delphi has been said to have become silent from the beginning of the Christian era; but so far was this from being the case, that in the reign of Nero, it delivered many responses, and particularly one which so exasperated this prince, that he went in person to Delphi, plundered the temple of almost all the wealth which it contained, and murdered the priests at the mouth of the cavern. After this period, the Latin writers make no mention of it for about fifty years, when it again revived; and among other responses, gave the well-known symbolical answer to Trajan.

The precise period of its total cessation has not been mentioned by any historian; but seems to have happened in the reign of Constantine the Great, when Christianity became the national religion of the Roman Empire; and oracles, as well as all the other forms of Pagan superstition, sunk into total contempt.

⁂ Those who are desirous of obtaining complete information respecting the oracles of Greece, may consult Van Dale de Oraculis Veterum, Venerius de Oraculis et Divinationibus, and Bulengerus de Oraculis et Vatibus, the last two of which works are to be found in Gronov. Thes. Antiq. Græc. tom. vii. They may also peruse an Essay of M. Hardion on the Oracle of Delphi in the 3d vol. of the Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions.

ESSAY III.

ON THE ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES.

Mysteries of Eleusis, the most remarkable of any instituted in ancient times. Reverence with which they were regarded, even by the wisest philosophers of antiquity. Splendour of the temple in which they were celebrated. Μυϛηρια μικρα. Office of the Μυϛαγωγος. Secrecy required of those who were initiated. In the mysteries every thing appears to have been explained by exhibitions. They were instituted by Erechtheus to represent the importance of agriculture and civilization to the happiness of mankind; and seem to have also been employed to promote the practice of virtue by teaching the doctrine of a future state, and the unity and perfection of the Supreme Being.

BESIDES the worship publicly offered to the different gods of antiquity, certain private ceremonies were instituted in honour of almost every divinity, to the celebration of which only some of their votaries were admitted. These rites, which, from the care with which they were concealed from the vulgar, obtained the name of mysteries, were not performed in all the places in which worship was paid to the gods to whom they were sacred; but only where these divinities had communicated some peculiar blessings to the inhabitants, or were regarded with particular veneration. Thus in Bæotia alone mysteries were at first celebrated to Bacchus; in Samothrace to Cybele; in Cyprus to Venus; and in Crete to Jupiter.

Of all these mysteries none became so remarkable as those at Eleusis, which were sacred to Ceres. Though instituted for the benefit of the Athenians, they might be communicated to all who were of Grecian extraction: and so excellent were thought to be the doctrines unfolded to the initiated, that persons of every description were eager to be admitted to them. While on earth, the initiated were believed to be under the immediate protection of the gods; and after death, when the rest of mankind were supposed to dwell in darkness and misery, they were thought to be instantly conducted to the islands of the blessed. "On us alone," says the poet Aristophanes, in a speech which he puts in the mouth of the initiated, "on us alone does the orb of day shine refulgent. We alone derive pleasure from its beams; we who, having been initiated, perform both to citizens and strangers every act of justice and humanity." Among the ancients, indeed, such importance was annexed to the mysteries, that without an acquaintance with them, no man was supposed capable of attaining to virtue; and dignified and irreproachable as in general was the conduct of Socrates, some of the Athenians entertained doubts of the sincerity of his piety and virtue, in consequence of his never having been initiated. It was not merely the vulgar who held the mysteries in this estimation: Isocrates speaks of them as the best gift of heaven to men; and in the same work in which Cicero ridicules the superstition of his countrymen, he mentions the mysteries in terms of veneration, and represents them as the most effectual means ever devised by any of mankind to promote the love and the practice of virtue.

As the mysteries formed an important part of the Pagan religion, and have often been totally misrepresented, it is the object of this essay to explain the manner in which they were celebrated, and to give some account of the secret doctrines which they were intended to disclose.

The Eleusinian mysteries, which, on account of their excellence, bore the general name of the Mysteries, were instituted by Erechtheus, a king of Athens who flourished several hundred years before the Trojan war, and were annually celebrated at Eleusis, a city of Attica, about eight miles from Athens. The temple, in which the most solemn part of them was performed, had originally been small and inelegant; but when rebuilt and decorated with much splendour by Pericles, became one of the most perfect models of architecture ever produced by human ingenuity, being formed of the finest Pentelican marble, and nearly 390 feet long, and 330 feet broad. During the celebration of the festival called Eleusinia, which continued for nine days, many thousand persons assembled at Eleusis in consequence of the games and processions then performed in honour of Ceres; but none of them, except such as the priests had allowed to be initiated, were permitted under any pretext to enter the temple. It was not at once that any person, however distinguished by rank or eminence, could obtain this privilege. A very strict investigation was previously made into his character and conduct; and at least a year before, he must have signified to the priests his earnest desire of being admitted to the benefit of initiation.

Soon after the institution of the mysteries, Hercules wished to be initiated before engaging in some dangerous expedition. It being unlawful to grant him immediate admission to the mysteries, the priests, who were unwilling to incur his displeasure, instituted what were called the Μυϛηρια μικρα, and celebrated them at Agra, a village adjoining to the walls of Athens. In the lesser mysteries, used from this time as a preparation for the greater, and annually celebrated at Agra, one of the inferior priests of Ceres inquired into the character and manners of the candidates for initiation; taught them the qualifications by which alone they could be entitled to this inestimable privilege; and by some discoveries which he made of the less important of the sacred doctrines, increased their ardour to obtain that perfect knowledge of them which could only be acquired at Eleusis.

During the night which followed the first day of the celebration of the Eleusinia, those deemed worthy of being initiated underwent a variety of external purifications, and were then admitted by the priests into the temple.

Besides many inferior ministers employed in the service of the goddess, four Athenians, descended from the most illustrious families in Attica, performed the ceremony of initiation. The office of the chief of these consisted in explaining the secret doctrines unfolded to the initiated, and was one of the most honourable in the state. This priest, styled *ιεροφαντης* or *μυϛαγωγος*, was always chosen out of the same family from which the first hierophant had been elected; and to add to the impression of the truths which he disclosed, it was thought necessary that his figure should be dignified, his voice musical and sonorous, and his manners decent and irreproachable. As soon as the gates of the temple were shut, the sacred herald, another of the principal ministers of the goddess, proclaimed aloud, Ἑκας, ἑκας εϛε βεβηλοι, which Virgil seems to have translated in the words which in the sixth book of the Æneid he puts into the mouth of the Sybil:

> Procul, O procul este profani.
>
> Æn. vi. 258.

After this proclamation, if any person was found in the temple who had not a right to be initiated, he was deemed guilty of a capital crime. In the reign of Philip II, King of Macedon, two young Acarnanians accidentally entered with the crowd into the temple at Eleusis. During the ceremony, they were discovered by some questions which they put to those who were near them, and were instantly brought before one of the Archons who attended to preserve order during the celebration of the mysteries. The young men declared that they were not aware of the imprópriety of remaining in the temple, and no doubt was entertained of their innocence; but the judge did not think himself at liberty to dispense with the law, and commanded them to be led to immediate execution.

Before the hierophant began to explain the mysteries, all who were present bound themselves by oath to reveal nothing of what was about to be unfolded, and called down on themselves the most dreadful execrations, if they should ever violate that engagement. This will account for the horror with which the Greeks regarded a discovery of any thing disclosed in the mysteries. Diagoras the Melian, the only person of antiquity known to have been guilty of this crime, was not merely considered at Athens as devoid of religion and virtue—a price was even set upon his head; nor afterwards dared he ever enter the confines of Attica. In one of the tragedies of Æschylus, the poet was thought to have alluded to a particular mentioned by the hierophant during the ceremony of initiation. The audience instantly interrupted the entertainment, and would have put Æschylus to death upon the stage, had he not demanded to be tried by the court of Areopagus, and proved to the satisfaction of the judges that the charge against him was unfounded.

Had the secrecy enjoined on the initiated been always religiously observed, it would have been vain to make any inquiry into the nature of the discoveries communicated by the *μυϛαγωγος*. Partly however from some obscure hints left us by a few ancient writers, and still more from some plainer intimations given by the initiated, after the mysteries were no longer regarded with the same degree of reverence, a probable conjecture may be formed respecting the most important particulars which the hierophant was accustomed to unfold. It may be proper to begin with observing that in this ceremony of initiation the secret doctrines were chiefly explained by the external representation of actions and events. "When about to be initiated," says a writer who lived in the fourth century of the Christian era, "we enter into a certain mystic dome, excelling in beauty and magnificence; we see many mystical sights; light and darkness alternately succeed each other; and a thousand other uncommon appearances are presented to our view." It was thought that such exhibitions would keep awake the attention of the most careless, and would make a more lasting impression than any words which the μυϛαγωγος could have employed. Horace says, with his usual knowledge of human nature,

> Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
> Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.
>
> De Art. Poet. 180, 181.

It is impossible to explain the manner in which these exhibitions were represented; but from the powerful effects which they produced on the minds of the initiated; from the anxiety and fear, and horror and joy, which they are said to have successively excited, there can be no doubt that the machinery was contrived with skill, and was well adapted to answer the end for which the *μυσταγωγος* employed it.

The first exhibitions displayed in the mysteries were symbolical of the benefits conferred by Ceres on the Athenians. According to the ancient Greek writers, the goddess Ceres was a Queen of Sicily, who had rendered her subjects happy by encouraging the practice of agriculture, and by the introduction of equal and salutary laws. Her daughter Proserpine having been privately carried away by Aidoneus, king of Thesprotia, Ceres wandered in quest of her through several districts of Greece, and while in Attica met with much kindness from the inhabitants. In return for their hospitality, she taught them the knowledge of agriculture, established a regular system of government, and persuaded them to leave the mountains and woods in which every family had hitherto lived apart, and to unite in society with each other.

In allusion to this important change made by Ceres on the situation of the Athenians, the mysteries began with a representation of the wretchedness of men in a savage state, exhibiting the uncertainty of their acquiring the means of subsistence, the feuds and dissensions in which they are perpetually involved with all around them; and the dreadful crimes to which they are driven by malice and revenge when unrestrained by the authority of law and the fear of punishment. In a moment the scene was changed. A magnificent statue of Ceres presented itself to the view of the initiated, and by various interesting exhibitions they were led to perceive the beneficial effects of industry, the sweets of social life, and the blessings of equal government and salutary laws.

By commemorating the benefits of Ceres, Erechtheus wished to impress on the minds of his subjects a belief of the necessity of government and industry to the welfare of society; but that object, though desirable, he meant to render subservient to the still more important end of forming the initiated to the practice of virtue. With this view he enjoined that no person should be instructed in the mysteries who was addicted to any of the grosser vices, or had been guilty of any notorious crime; and so strictly was this regulation observed at Eleusis, that for many ages profligacy of manners was considered as a certain ground of exclusion. After the murder of his mother, the Emperor Nero went into Greece, with the intention of being admitted to the mysteries; but relinquished his design of applying at Eleusis to be initiated, from a conviction that the priests would never consent to grant this privilege to one stained with so detestable a crime; and the amiable and virtuous Antoninus, when unjustly supposed to have been accessary to the murder of Avidius Cassius, solicited and obtained initiation, deeming it to be the most unequivocal proof of his innocence. It was not merely before admission to the mysteries, that the initiated had an inducement to be virtuous: during their celebration, they were bound by the most sacred vows to distinguish themselves by a life of virtue, and were reminded of the infamy, as well as inconsistency, of disgracing by a vicious conduct the dignified character which they were afterwards to bear.

Whatever temporary influence these considerations might exert over the minds of the initiated, Erechtheus was aware that of themselves they were insufficient to produce any permanent change on those admitted to the mysteries; and wished to impress them with the belief of a principle, which might accompany them into the business of life, and have such strength as to counteract the allurements of interest and passion. Such a principle he thought to be the doctrine of a future state; and in the ceremony of initiation endeavoured to exhibit it in a light fitted to imprint it deeply on the mind. While the initiated were contemplating the blessings diffused by Ceres, the temple was suddenly involved in darkness; the ground seemed to shake beneath their feet, and the thunder to roll above their heads; and frequent flashes of lightning conspired to render the darkness more terrible. In the intervals between the peals of thunder, was heard the distant sound of lamentation, till at length the gates of Tartarus appeared to open, and disclosed the state of those condemned to the abodes of misery. In them was painted wretchedness in all its various forms; while many of those who had been impious to the gods or unjust to men, who had violated any of the social duties of life, or had lived in the habitual indulgence of passion, seemed to pass in succession before the initiated, and taught them an awful lesson of the misery which sooner or later would be attendant on vice. While these scenes were exciting in the spectators the feelings of amazement and horror, the back gate of the temple was opened, and they were conducted into an enclosure laid out into a number of delightful bowers. In this pleasing retreat, they were soothed with the sound of the sweetest music; and having recovered from their terror, conversed with each other about the surprising exhibitions which they had witnessed, and in idea anticipated the happiness, which, if virtuous, they would after death enjoy in the fields of Elysium.

After this representation of the punishments and rewards reserved for a future state of existence, there is reason to believe that the μυσταγωγος disclosed to the initiated another doctrine no less conducive to the happiness and virtue of man. In ancient times, one of the chief obstacles to the moral improvement of mankind arose from the conceptions entertained of the gods. All of them were thought liable to the weaknesses of humanity, and in many instances were believed to have been guilty of the most detestable crimes. To men actuated by any violent passion, it was natural to recollect the conduct of such divinities, and in their example to seek a justification of their own vices. In a comedy of Terence, one of the characters is made to say, "If Jupiter scruple not to act in this manner, Ego homuncio hoc non facerem?" The same idea occurs in some of the Greek tragedies, and in consequence seems to have occasionally been expressed in real life. In the mysteries, the hierophant exposed in their proper colours such false and dangerous opinions. He taught the initiated that the common objects of their worship were either subordinate spirits employed as ministers of the Deity, or men who, having been the authors of some useful inventions, or having rendered some signal services to their fellow creatures, had after death been celebrated by the poets as superior to humanity. He then taught them that there was one supreme cause of all, alike free from imperfection and change; who by his providence regulated the course of events throughout the universe; who observed the conduct of his rational creatures; and while he rewarded the virtuous, would inflict punishment on those who debased themselves by indulgence in vice.

Hence appears the reason why Socrates, though he always spoke with reverence of the mysteries, never chose to be initiated. One of the great truths which he made it the business of his life to inculcate, was this very doctrine of the unity and perfection of the Divinity. Had he ever been admitted to the mysteries, he durst not have taught the most important article which they disclosed without incurring the imputation of impiety, and exposing himself to the punishment of exile or of death; but it being generally known that he had never been initiated, he was long allowed to teach all with whom he associated the same pure system of religion unfolded in the mysteries.

Hence also appears the cause of the inviolable secrecy, required of those who were admitted to the privilege of initiation. The great body of the Athenians who were superstitious in the extreme, and had no conception of any divinities except those whose nature they had learned from the writings of the poets, would have looked with horror on an institution which had a tendency to destroy all reverence for the objects of their worship; and, notwithstanding the influence of the wiser of their countrymen, would soon have prohibited its celebration. Consequently it became necessary to conceal from the vulgar the discoveries made to the initiated, and to disclose them only to those who in the lesser mysteries had been found superior to the prejudices of superstition.

The Eleusinian mysteries having been instituted by a king of Athens, the state continued to superintend their celebration. The second of the Archons, who had the name of βασιλευς, attended at Eleusis during the festival; and, besides punishing any who attempted to disturb it, was careful to maintain in the ceremony of initiation the purity and solemnity by which, for many ages after the reign of Erechtheus, it continued to be distinguished.

The Athenians had no sooner lost their independence, than they ceased to display the virtue and public spirit which had animated their ancestors; and the corruption and degeneracy which debased their character at length extended to the mysteries. The civil magistrate being no longer employed to superintend them, the season at which they were celebrated, which was always during the night, joined to the secrecy observed by those who were present, gradually introduced into them such a degree of licentiousness and indecency as rendered their abolition not only expedient, but necessary. It is to this degenerate state, to which the mysteries had sunk about the age of Constantine the Great, that all those authors have alluded, who condemn this institution. In itself it was admirably calculated to promote the practice of virtue, and to counteract the pernicious effect of the heathen religion on the character of those who professed it.

⁂ In the treatise entitled Eleusinia, which is inserted in the 7th vol. of Gronov. Thes. Ant. Græc., Meursius, with his usual industry, has collected almost every passage in which the ancient writers allude to the mysteries. Warburton has introduced into the second book of his Divine Legation of Moses a very learned and ingenious dissertation on the mysteries; and though many of his ideas are fanciful, yet, after much consideration, I am convinced that the objects of this institution, and the doctrines disclosed to the initiated, were such as he has represented.

ESSAY IV.

ON THE OLYMPIC GAMES.

Origin of the Olympic games, and revival of them by Iphitus. Object which he had in view. Superintendence of the games given to the Elians. Office and power of the Ἑλληνοδίκαι. Qualifications required of those who wished to contend at Olympia. Most of the exercises performed on the Stadium. The simple foot race the most ancient of the games, and a victory in it the most honourable. Different kinds of races afterwards introduced at Olympia. Wrestling. Object of the wrestler. Νικᾳν ακονιτι. Boxing with the cestus practised at Olympia, but held in little estimation by the Greeks. Nature of the contests called Pancratium and Pentathlon. Magnificence of the chariot races. Place where they were performed. In them the prize could be obtained without being present, and even by women. Rewards and honours conferred on the conquerors in the Olympic games.

THE Greeks were passionately fond of festivals and games. In every particular state institutions of that kind were occasionally celebrated for the amusement of the inhabitants; but these were far less interesting than the four public games frequented by multitudes from all the districts of Greece. The Pythian games celebrated at Delphi were sacred to Apollo; the Isthmian at Corinth to Neptune: the Nemæan at Nemæa in Argolis to Hercules; and the Olympic to Jupiter. Instead of describing each of these separately, which would make it necessary to repeat the same particulars oftener than once, I propose in this essay to give an account only of the Olympic games, they being by far the most splendid, and a victory in them being reputed the most honourable.

Olympia, situate on the beautiful banks of the Alpheus, and at the distance of thirty miles from the city of Elis, had from the remotest antiquity been sacred to Jupiter. During the heroic ages, som[illegible] Grecian chiefs had there celebrated games in testimony of gratitude for victories which they had obtained; but it was not till the age of Lycurgus that they were performed at stated times, or were brought under certain rules. At that period, Iphitus, a descendant of Hercules, succeeded to the throne of Elis. Having found his country perpetually harassed by incursions from the more powerful states in its neighbourhood, and being conscious of the impossibility of rendering so inconsiderable a state as Elis formidable by arms, he conceived the design of guarding it by religion from external attacks, and of securing to it the blessing of perpetual peace. With this view he procured an oracle from Delphi, commanding the Olympic games to be revived in honour of Jupiter; conferring the superintendence of them upon the Elians, and denouncing the indignation of Apollo against any who should dare to disturb the tranquillity of that people. In consequence of this command of the Oracle, joined to the influence of Lycurgus, the friend of Iphitus, the Olympic games came to be regularly celebrated every fifth year at Olympia, and the right of the Elians to direct them, though questioned at first, was soon universally acknowledged.

The games commenced on the eleventh day of Hecatombaion, a month which began at the first new moon after the summer solstice, and continued for five days. In Greece the heat is then excessive; and to add to the difficulty and fatigue of the games, the more violent exercises were performed in the afternoon, when even the spectators were scarcely able to remain exposed to the sun.

For 200 years one of the descendants of Iphitus presided during the celebration of the games. This office was afterwards conferred on two persons chosen by lot out of the whole body of the Elians. One was at length appointed by lot from each of the Elian tribes, and their number varied from eight to twelve according to the tribes of which the nation happened to consist. These officers had the name of 'Ελληνοδῖκαι, or judges of Greece; and, during the five days that they continued in office, possessed considerable power: they adjudged the prizes: punished with scourging or fines any of the candidates who were guilty of irregularity or unfairness; and had the privilege of excluding from the games, not only individuals, but the whole inhabitants of a state. An Athenian, named Calippus, had been fined by the judges for having bribed his adversary. The Athenians were unwilling that any citizen of theirs should incur such disgrace, and sent the orator Hyperides to request that this sentence might be repealed. The judges however still required the fine to be paid; and on the refusal of the Athenians to enforce their order, excluded from the games all the inhabitants of Attica. The Oracle at Delphi, being soon after consulted by the people of Athens, refused to give them any answer while under this sentence of exclusion, in consequence of which they obliged Calippus to submit to the penalty imposed by the judges, and only then obtained permission to attend the games. On another occasion the Lacedæmonians were fined by the judges for having laid waste a part of the territory of Elis; and having refused to pay the fine, were in like manner excluded from the games.

The Spartans being then the haughtiest and most powerful people in Greece, the Argives, Athenians, and Arcadians, sent a considerable military force to support the authority of the judges; and so sacred was it esteemed, that they were determined to defend it by arms, had the Lacedæmonians presumed to attend the celebration of the festival.

The superintendence of the games was so important to the Elians, that the judges observed the strictest impartiality in the discharge of their office. They formed no connexion with any of the candidates; received no recommendatory letters; and in presence of a statue of Jupiter, took an oath that in adjudging the prizes they would be regulated solely by a regard to justice. An appeal lay from their decision to the senate of Olympia; but with such fidelity were they accustomed to execute the trust reposed in them, that mention has been made of only one appeal from their sentence, and it was decided in their favour.

That the judges might be able to discharge the duties of their office with exactness as well as fidelity, they were required to spend a part of every day in the Gymnasium at Elis for ten months before the celebration of the games. During this period, they were taught all the various branches of their duty; and acquired such complete information respecting it, that no case could occur at the games in which they were not qualified to decide.

One of the most important duties of the judges consisted in excluding from the different contests all who were not possessed of the qualifications required by Iphitus. The games having been instituted for the amusement and advantage of the Greeks, the first requisite in the candidates, for the want of which no rank or power could compensate, was a Grecian extraction. In his youth Alexander the First, son of Amyntas, king of Macedon, was desirous of contending in the foot race at Olympia. The judges objected to his being a candidate on the ground that he was not a Greek; and it was not till he had proved his family to have come originally from Argos, that they granted him permission to contend.

As the assembly at Olympia was composed of men who from their youth had been accustomed to exertions of strength and agility, there would have been an impropriety in allowing any person to be a competitor for the prize who did not deserve to obtain it. To prevent the competition of such as were unskilful, the candidates were required to swear that for ten months before the commencement of the games they had made it their constant study to prepare themselves for the contest in which they were to engage; and during the last thirty days they were obliged to reside at Elis, and to practise daily under the inspection of the judges. During this last period, when the severest exercises were imposed on the candidates, the 'Ελληνοδικαι had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the qualifications of every individual, and never failed to exclude from the contest all who were not in some degree deserving of the applause of the spectators. Hence, the permission to contend at Olympia was regarded as no inconsiderable honour, and served as a consolation to the vanquished.

To add to the dignity and utility of the games, Iphitus had further enacted that a strict investigation should be made into the character of those who wished to contend. Immediately before the commencement of the different exercises, a herald led every candidate separately through the assembly, and demanded if any one knew him to be a man of profligate character, or to have been guilty of a notorious crime. As numbers were present from every state in Greece, to some of whom each of the combatants was known, it rarely happened that any person of suspicious character chose to expose himself to such a scrutiny. It was after this proclamation that Themistocles objected to the admission of Hiero, king of Syracuse, as a candidate for the prize in the chariot race, on the ground of his being a tyrant. Among a people so fond of liberty as the Greeks, it may be supposed that the accusation of Themistocles would be heard with applause; but on a representation that it was not Hiero who had deprived his countrymen of independence, that since his accession to the throne he had been guilty of no act of injustice or oppression, and that during the Persian wa[illegible]e had rendered many signal services to the Greeks, the judges overruled the objection of Themistocles; and even the spectators exhibited every mark of joy at the victory in the chariot race which Hiero obtained.

In the Olympic games it was thought necessary to guard against the employment of any unfair means to carry off the prize. The candidates were required to make a solemn declaration that they would not endeavour to gain the victory by bribing their adversaries, or by a violation of the laws regulating the different contests; and any person guilty of a breach of this promise was not merely deprived of the crown, but was fined by the judges, and could never after contend at the games. These regulations seem to have accomplished the purpose for which they were intended, since, during several hundred years, only five instances occurred in which any improper artifice was employed by the competitors in the games at Olympia.

The place, on which most of the games were performed, was a terrace of earth inclosed on each side by a bank of considerable height, and being about 620 feet, or the eighth of a Grecian mile in length, thence acquired the name of the Stadium. On one side of it were the seats of the judges, and on the other were places for the priestesses of a temple of Ceres built in the neighbourhood. Whether they availed themselves of this privilege, seems to be uncertain; but they were the only women allowed to be present. If any other person of that sex had been found at the games, she would have been thrown head-long from the summit of a rock.

For some time after the revival of the games by Iphitus, the foot race was the only exercise performed at Olympia, and consisted in running from the barrier placed at one extremity of the stadium to the goal situate at the other. As the competitors were always numerous, it was customary to divide them by lot into different classes, which contended in succession; and the conquerors in the several divisions afterwards ran together for the prize. The foot race being the most ancient of the games, a victory in it was always deemed the most honourable. The conqueror was the first who received the prize, and had the exclusive right of giving his name to the Olympiad. Thus the battle of Thermopylæ was said to have happened in the first year of the 75th Olympiad, Scamander of Mytelene being conqueror in the foot race: and so well were the Greeks acquainted with those who had been victorious in this exercise, that, in fixing the date of events, the ancient historians often mention merely the name of the person who had obtained the prize, without thinking it necessary to specify the particular Olympiad in which he had been successful.

Though a victory in the simple foot race continued to be the most honourable, this exercise was supposed to require too small a degree of exertion. Soon after the death of Iphitus a race was introduced, in which it was required to turn the goal and run back to the barrier: and at a subsequent period, when the athletic exercises formed the common amusement of the Greeks, races were instituted, in which those who ran had to turn the goal eight, ten, and even twelve times, before they were entitled to the prize. In these last contests, and still more in the race in which men ran in armour, it is obvious that the victory would depend more on strength than on swiftness.

In the foot race, and in all the other exercises at Olympia, boys contended with each other, and were animated to exertion by rewards of the same kind with those conferred on such as had attained to manhood. These contests however were soon discovered to be productive of very pernicious effects, and came to be discouraged throughout Greece. It was found that this premature exertion of strength exhausted the constitution, and that those who were successful at this early period of life, scarcely ever obtained the prize in manhood.

Wrestling, an exercise held in high estimation by the Greeks, was the next in point of antiquity to the foot race. The object of the wrestler was to throw his adversary to the ground; but it was not till this had been thrice repeated, that he obtained the victory. Like all who contended in the games, the wrestlers were accustomed to rub their bodies with oil, partly to check the excessive perspiration occasioned by the heat and the violence of the exercises, and partly from an opinion that the oil gave the limbs a greater degree of pliancy and agility. As the smoothness occasioned by the oil would have prevented the combatants from grasping each other with firmness, it was customary for them, after being anointed, to roll themselves in the dust of the Stadium, or to be sprinkled with a fine sand kept for that purpose at Olympia. In allusion to this practice, the expression *νικᾳν ακονιτι*, is used by the ancient writers, in speaking of those who obtained the prize without a competitor, and consequently did not need to undergo that preparation. If in falling, one of the wrestlers dragged his adversary along with him, the combat was continued on the ground, till one of the parties had forced the other to yield the victory.

In ancient times, the exercise of boxing was generally performed with the cestus, consisting of several thongs of leather wrapped round the hand and arm, and sometimes lined with plates of metal. This dreadful combat had been common during the heroic ages; but was not, till a late period, introduced at Olympia, and does not seem to have ever been held in much estimation. Alexander the Great did not include it among the games which he instituted in Asia; and even before his time it was seldom practised in Greece except by the lowest of the people. The more intelligent Greeks were disgusted with an exercise which seldom failed to maim and disfigure those who engaged in it, and which, instead of enabling men to bear the hardships and dangers of the field, often rendered them incapable of any future exertion.

The same objection lay still more strongly against the Pancratium, an exercise composed of wrestling and boxing. In wrestling it was unlawful to strike an adversary, and in boxing with the cestus no attempt could be made to throw him to the ground; but in the Pancratium, men were allowed to employ whatever means they chose for obtaining the victory. A Pancratiast, of the name of Sostratus, was accustomed to seize and break the fingers of his adversary, and afterwards to grasp them with such violence as soon obliged him to yield the victory. By this practice, he obtained twelve victories in the different games of Greece, and was honoured with a number of statues in the attitude in which he had conquered. If a Pancratiast killed his adversary, or plucked out his eyes, or tore him with his teeth, he was deprived of the prize; but these were the only restraints under which he was laid. He might render him miserable or useless during life, without tarnishing the honour of his victory.

The combatants with the cestus, and in the Pancratium, often displayed uncommon magnanimity. One of them received a stroke on the mouth which drove out almost all his teeth. To conceal what he had suffered, he swallowed them; and his adversary disappointed at the little success which seemed to have attended his last effort, immediately surrendered the victory.

Arrachion, a celebrated Pancratiast, had often been successful. His adversary, aware of his skill, instantly entwined himself about his body, and grasped his throat so closely, that Arrachion found himself at the point of suffocation. Unable to extricate himself from the hold of his opponent, and determined rather to die than confess himself vanquished, he broke one of the toes of his adversary, and, by the pain which this occasioned, made him resign the victory at the very moment when he himself expired. Though dead, he was proclaimed victorious, and was buried with the crown upon his head. In the cestus and Pancratium, the contest was finished when one of the combatants acknowledged his defeat. In consequence of this, the Spartans, though often competitors in the other exercises, were not allowed to contend in either of these. Lycurgus had enjoined his countrymen never to fly in battle nor yield the victory to an enemy. If then they had engaged in these exercises, cases might have occurred in which they must have disregarded this command of their lawgiver, or by obeying it have sacrificed to honour a life which they owed to the service of their country.

The Pentathlon originally consisted of the five exercises of running, wrestling, leaping, pitching the discus, and throwing the javelin. The combat with the cestus was afterwards added; but the name Pentathlon was still retained. Three of these exercises have already been described. In leaping, the object of the competitors was to exceed each other in the distance to which they leaped, and in this they were assisted by plates of metals into which they inserted their fingers, and by means of which they pushed forward their bodies. In the exercise of leaping, the ancients seem to have far surpassed the moderns, since mention is made of some persons who in the public games leaped to the astonishing length of fifty feet.

The discus was a smooth and very heavy mass of metal cast in the same manner as the quoit. The object of those who practised this exercise, as well as that of the javelin, was not so much to strike any mark, as to surpass an antagonist in the length of the throw without going beyond a certain line drawn on the Stadium. In the Pentathlon it was necessary to conquer successively in at least three of the exercises. Though deprived of the possibility of gaining the prize, the competitors were required to continue the contest partly for the amusement of the spectators, and partly to give them an opportunity of rendering their adversaries as unsuccessful as themselves. It often happened that not one of the competitors was entitled to the prize; but this was of little consequence, since it was then that the competition yielded most amusement to those who beheld it.

The most splendid of the Olympic games, and that which seems to have afforded the greatest amusement, was the chariot race. The Greek chariot had only two wheels; was uncovered above, and open behind, and when used in the race had no seat for the charioteer. The Hippodrome in which the races were performed was more than double the length of the Stadium. Near one extremity was the barrier, whence the horses started; at the distance of two stadia, or the fourth of a Grecian mile, was a pillar separated by a small space from the other end of the Hippodrome; and the course, during which the charioteers had to drive twelve times round that pillar, and ten times round another situated at the barrier, was six Grecian, or nearly five English miles. The difficulty, and even the danger of such a race, was great. The number of the chariots generally drawn by four horses abreast, was always considerable; and besides the eagerness with which every charioteer pressed to approach as near as possible to the pillar with the view of shortening the course, the distance betwixt that and the extremity of the Hippodrome appears to have been small. In passing a temple erected at the side of the Hippodrome to a deity named Taraxippus, the hazard of the course was particularly great. The Greeks supposed that this divinity delighted in terrifying the horses which approached him; but the fact seems to have been, that, in order to oblige the Greeks to train their horses with care, the judges of the games were at this temple accustomed to employ some means of frightening such horses as were not thoroughly broken. In consequence of these circumstances, there were few races in which some chariots were not overturned or dashed to pieces against the pillars; and on one occasion it is mentioned, that of forty chariots which started from the barrier, only one was in a situation to finish the course.

At the Olympic games, it was not necessary for the proprietors of the horses or chariots which ran over the course to contend in person. It often happened that they were not present, and yet, when successful, they obtained the same honours as the conquerors in the athletic exercises.

Agesilaus provoked at the exultation expressed by a Spartan, who had obtained this kind of victory, made his sister enter herself as a competitor in the chariot race at Olympia; and she, as well as some other women, carried off the prize.

The rewards bestowed on the conquerors in the Olympic games were most pleasing to an ingenuous mind. The first reward conferred on them was in the moment of victory, and consisted in the shout of acclamation which proceeded from every part of the assembly, an acclamation naturally arising from admiration of the prowess or skill displayed by the conqueror, and from that interest which men, unactuated by envy or malice, take in the happiness of others. It was then that branches of palms were put into their hands; and by these, as tokens of victory, they were afterwards distinguished from the rest of the spectators. At the conclusion of the games, all of them were summoned before the judges; crowns of olive were put on their heads; and they were conducted, one after another, through the assembly by a herald, who proclaimed their own names, and those of their parents and their countries. In this moment, their happiness was thought to be complete, and their glory to extend to all with whom they were connected. Two sons of Diagoras, the Rhodian, were conquerors in the same Olympiad. Having received the crown, they took him on their shoulders, and amidst the shouts of the spectators carried him through the assembly. "Die, Diagoras," said a Spartan, in passing him, "you cannot climb to heaven."

Before leaving Olympia, the conqueror was allowed to erect a statue to his honour in the grove sacred to Jupiter, and to have an ode composed by some eminent poet in his praise. On his return to his native country, a part of the walls of the city in which he resided was thrown down, and he entered through this breach, accompanied by a multitude of his fellow citizens who had gone to conduct him. In some places, a salary during life was allowed him at the public expense: at Sparta he had the privilege of fighting near the person of the King in battle; and every where he was entitled to a distinguished place in all festivals and games, and was thought to have conferred the highest glory on his country. Olympiæ vicisse, said Cicero, prope majus et gloriosius fuit quam Romæ triumphasse; and Horace says

....Palma...nobilis
Terrarum dominos evehit ad deos. Lib. i. Od. i.

⁂ Complete information, on every point connected with the public games, may be found in P. Fabri Agonisticon, sive de Re Athletica; in Gronov. Thes. Ant. Græc. tom. viii; Potter's Archæologia Græca, book ii; a Treatise on the Olympic Games prefixed to West's Translation of Pindar; and a Series of Dissertations on the Exercises practised at the Games in the Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscript. by M. Barette; and Pownall's Antiq.

ESSAY V.

ON THE MILITARY, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY EFFECTS OF THE GAMES.

Causes of the honours conferred on the conquerors in the public games. These contests counteracted the effects of the climate of Greece, and contributed to the eminence in war to which its inhabitants attained. Reason of the institution of the horse and chariot races: in a political view the games were also of advantage. They afforded an innocent and interesting employment to the citizens of the different states of Greece, and had a tendency to check the violence of their contentions, and unite them in friendship with each other. The poetical contests, and other circumstances connected with the games, were favourable to the advancement of literature. Lyric poetry—Pindar. Effect of the games on the fine arts—on commerce—and in facilitating the study of ancient history.

THE Olympic games had been revived by Iphitus merely with a view to promote the interest of his country, and were soon found to be admirably calculated for answering the end which he wished to accomplish. The multitude of strangers who, during the celebration of the games, resorted from every quarter to Olympia, enriched the Elians by what they paid for the provisions and commodities which they had occasion to purchase; while the sacred character with which that people was invested secured to them the advantages of perpetual peace, and gave them a degree of importance in Greece to which they otherwise could never have attained. The beneficial effects of the games were not confined to the Elians. The Grecian statesmen and legislators thought them no less advantageous to the whole body of the Greeks; and, by the rewards and honours which they held forth to the conquerors at Olympia, they endeavoured to animate their countrymen to contend in the games. For many ages this conviction of the utility of these contests continued to be universal throughout Greece: and even so late as the time of Lucian, that philosopher represents them as one of the chief causes of the eminence to which the Greeks had attained. In the following essay, it is proposed to illustrate the military, political, and literary advantages with which the games were attended; an inquiry which will account for the seemingly extravagant honours conferred on those who obtained the prize, and will give an opportunity of mentioning a few other particulars respecting this institution, which seem to be deserving of notice.

The inhabitants of the southern regions of the globe have often been celebrated for delicacy of taste, and luxuriance of imagination; but have rarely risen to eminence in war. The excessive heat of a climate has almost uniformly been found to enfeeble the constitution of men, to unfit them for exertion, and to foster an immoderate propensity to indolence and pleasure. The inhabitants of Indostan, and of the countries constituting the ancient kingdom of Assyria, have undergone a variety of revolutions; but inactivity has always formed the leading feature in their character. In every age they have fallen an easy prey to invaders; nor have the repeated instances of oppression to which they have been exposed, ever roused them to limit the exorbitant power of their sovereigns. The Greeks, living in a climate nearly as sultry as that of Asia, would probably have fallen victims to the same indolence, had not their early legislators perceived this danger, and employed the most judicious efforts to avert it. Among the means devised to accomplish this end, none seem to have been so effectual as the public games. By the flattering rewards which they held forth to the exertion of strength and agility, the love of ease was counteracted, and every labour became tolerable, when sweetened by the prospect of the glory to which it might lead. It was not by any occasional effort that a victory could be gained at Olympia. The games were performed in the hottest season of the year; they required the most violent exertion; and some of them continued with little intermission for several hours. Success in them, then, could be obtained only by those who were inured to hardship; who had been accustomed to practise the athletic exercises while exposed to the scorching heat of the sun, and who had abstained from every pleasure which has a tendency to debilitate the constitution and lessen the power of exertion. Horace says,

> Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
> Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit,
> Abstinuit venere et vino.— De Art. Poet. 413.

Such was the manner in which every Greek was trained from his infancy; and can we wonder at the indifference with which he regarded hardships that, even to the hardiest soldiers, would now appear insurmountable? To men who every day spent many hours in the most violent exercises of the Gymnasium, how easy would seem the usual operations of war, and how rarely would actual service involve them in any toil so severe as that to which, from amusement, or the desire of glory, they were daily accustomed to submit.

The exercises, to which, in consequence of the games, the Greeks were led to apply, did not merely invigorate their constitutions, and inure them to hardship and fatigue; they were still more directly calculated to fit them for the practice of war. In ancient times, when the use of fire-arms was unknown, battles were not won, as at present, by superiority in discipline, or mechanical skill in a few simple evolutions. On a signal from the generals, the combatants closed with each other, and were successful in proportion to the degree of their strength and agility, or, in other words, of their perfection in the very exercises to which they had been accustomed in the games. By skill in the gymnastic exercises, accordingly, the Greeks, though inhabitants of the most sultry part of Europe, attained an eminence in war which no other nation ever surpassed. They were wont to boast that an army of Greeks was equal to ten times the number of barbarians; and, as a proof of the influence of the games, it is mentioned by Herodotus, that the individuals who contributed the most to the victories obtained over the Persians, were those who had most frequently carried off the prize at Olympia.

This tendency of the games to foster the military genius of the inabitants of Greece will account for the honours conferred on the conquerors in the athletic exercises; but it may appear extraordinary that the competitors in the horse and chariot races, though exempted from the necessity of contending in person, should be entitled to the same distinctions. Philip, of Macedon, gained the prize at Olympia while engaged in the siege of Potidæa; and the olive crown was adjudged to the sister of Agesilaus, though, with the exception of certain priestesses, no woman durst be present at the celebration of the games. In this, however, the inconsistency was merely apparent; the object of the horse and chariot races being no less important than that of the rest of the games.

The territories of most of the Grecian states were rocky and mountainous, and very unfavourable for the rearing of horses. During the Trojan war, the few horses brought by the Greeks to Troy were employed more for ostentation than use in drawing the chariots of their chiefs. At the battle of Marathon, the Athenians seem to have had no cavalry; and it was not till the expulsion of the Persians out of Greece, that they were able to assemble three hundred horse. At an early period, the Greeks seem to have felt the inconvenience of this deficiency of cavalry; and with the view of encouraging the rearing of horses, instituted various horse and chariot races throughout Greece.

Six hundred and eighty years before the Christian æra, a race of chariots with four horses was introduced at Olympia; a few years after, one by men on horseback; and nearly three centuries after this period, a race of chariots with two horses. It was thought that in these games the rich and the great might wish to surpass each other in the number and value of their horses, and would be gratified with the prospect of obtaining the Olympic crown without submitting to the labour of the gymnastic exercises, or condescending to contend with men of inferior rank to themselves. This object, however, would not have been attained, had the candidates been required to direct the horses. Few would have possessed sufficient skill to guide them in so long a course, and even these might have been unwilling to expose themselves to the danger attendant on such races as were performed in the games. By the regulations established at Olympia, these difficulties were removed, and the beneficial effects of the horse and chariot races justified the wisdom of those who contrived them. Several hundred horses often contended in the different races at Olympia; and the very rapid increase of the number of cavalry, in the latter ages of the history of Greece, may, in a great measure, be attributed to the influence of the games.

The political effects of these contests were no less important than those which they produced on the military character of the Greeks. In a free state, nothing is more dangerous than the idleness of any considerable number of the citizens. So much are men formed for action, that if not employed in some innocent or useful pursuit, they will either plunge into dissipation and vice, or will form schemes subversive of the interest and happiness of their country. In the republics of Greece, this danger was peculiarly formidable. In many of them, little attention was paid to the fine arts, or to any branch of science. In most of them, the mechanical employments were thought unworthy of freemen; and thus the great body of the citizens were excluded from all the usual occupations of men. By the importance which the games annexed to the practice of the gymnastic exercises, they removed this inconvenience; and, by affording ample and constant scope for the activity of the citizens, effectually prevented the misery and vice which are the necessary attendants on indolence. Another political effect resulting from the games, is an additional proof of the wisdom of encouraging their celebration.

Greece is broken in a very uncommon degree by rivers, and seas, and mountains, and thence was early divided into a number of different districts, almost all of which long retained their independence. This division of Greece was attended with many advantages. The small extent of the Grecian states enabled their citizens to acquire and preserve a free constitution of government, while their vicinity to each other roused their emulation, and called forth exertions of genius and eminence in war, to which in no other situation they would probably have attained. Unfortunately, however, this emulation too often degenerated into jealousy and hatred; and even before the Trojan war, different states had begun to waste against each other that force which ought to have been exerted only against the enemies of Greece.

Many of the Grecian statesmen seem to have been aware of the fatal effects of these intestine wars, and by various means endeavoured to eradicate the seeds of discord, and to unite in friendship all who bore the name of Greeks. Nothing could be better calculated to accomplish this patriotic design than the institution of the games. The exclusion given to all competitors who were not of Grecian extraction; the common sacrifices offered to the same gods; the similarity of pursuits, and the participation of the same pleasures; all these circumstances tended to remind them of their common origin, and to make them view each other in the light of allies and of friends.

There also the inhabitants of different states often became connected with one another, perceived the folly of the prejudices which they had entertained against all who were not of the same tribe with themselves, and diffused among their countrymen at home the same liberal sentiments which they themselves had conceived.

To increase the tranquillity and pleasure of the games, peace was always proclaimed throughout Greece some time before their celebration, and continued till the spectators had time to return to the states whence they came. In this interval the rage, kindled by some accidental interference of interest, had time to cool: men of moderation and virtue had an opportunity of entering into negotiations for peace; and all were enabled to contrast the blessings of ease and tranquillity with the horrors and dangers of war. It cannot be said that the games put a period to dissension among the Greeks; but there can be no doubt that they often diminished or suspended the animosities of different states, and in this manner contributed to retard the ruin of Greece.

At the time of the institution of the games, the Greeks were rude and illiterate, and could derive amusement only from exhibitions of strength or agility. In every period of their history they continued to behold the athletic exercises with delight; but when refined by the study of art and of science, they had still greater enjoyment in contests suited to the taste of a polished and enlightened people. From an early period, poetical and musical competitions formed a part of the Pythian games. They were afterwards introduced at Olympia; and Euripides, with many other poets of distinguished eminence, is said to have there contended for the prize. The rewards conferred on the conquerors were of the same kind with those obtained by the successful candidates in the athletic exercises, and the poet had the prospect of being celebrated through Greece for the more flattering superiority in genius and taste. Poets were not the only authors who had an opportunity of rising to distinction at Olympia. Men of eminence in every department of literature were accustomed to carry their compositions to the games, and recite them to the crowds, ever eager to listen to any work of genius. There Gorgias and Isocrates, the two most admired sophists in Greece, rehearsed some of their orations; and Herodotus read many interesting passages of his history.

Before the invention of printing, the difficulty and expense of procuring books were great; and an author had reason to fear that many years might elapse before his productions would be circulated to any extent. This discouragement to exertion in literature was removed by means of the public games. A short time after Herodotus recited a part of his history at Olympia, he was known in all the states through which he passed as the historian who had celebrated the exploits of his countrymen; and every Greek longed for an opportunity of receiving from his work the same delight which had been expressed by those who heard him read it at the games. It was no ordinary exertion of genius which gained applause from such an audience as was assembled at Olympia. Composed of individuals from every state in Greece, who were jealous of the honour of their own countrymen, and envious of the superiority of the citizens of every other republic, they balanced with care the merit of all the productions submitted to their investigation, and applauded only those, the merit of which the most rigid criticism was forced to acknowledge.

There was one species of composition in which poets had the strongest inducement to excel. It was customary for every conqueror in the games to offer a solemn sacrifice to the god whom he considered as his protector, and, during the ceremony, to employ a chorus to recite an ode composed in his honour. In this species of ode poets were animated to attain to eminence, not merely by pecuniary rewards, but by the prospect of being known and celebrated by all who were present at the games. It was by poems of this description that Pindar has acquired immortal renown. No subject appears more barren in itself, or less adapted for poetry, than the praises of men who often had no other merit than that of skill in some athletic exercise: yet so happy are his digressions to any remarkable circumstance in their family or their country; so dignified and sublime are the sentiments of magnanimity and virtue which he contrives to introduce; and, above all, so wonderfully forcible and majestic is his mode of expression, that every reader of taste peruses his writings with admiration and delight, and feels that in lyric poetry his merit is unrivalled. The Athenians, in common with all the states of Greece, acknowledged the power of his genius, and lavished on him various marks of their regard. The Oracle at Delphi enjoined that a part of the first fruits offered to Apollo should be allotted to Pindar; and long after his death, Alexander the Great, at the same time that he destroyed Thebes, spared the house and family of the poet.

The institution of the games was no less favourable to the improvement of the fine arts than of literature. Besides the exhibition which painters often made of their productions at Olympia, every conqueror had a right to erect a statue to his honour in the grove sacred to Jupiter, and naturally wished to perpetuate his own fame by the eminence of the artist whom he employed to form it. Sculptors were actuated to exertion, not only by the wealth which, if skilful, they were thus secure of acquiring; but on every statue, when finished, the artist was required to inscribe his own name, together with that of the conqueror in whose honour it had been made. His talents were thus to be known to posterity; and as at Olympia were to be found productions of every eminent statuary in Greece, his fame was to bear an exact proportion to the excellence in his art to which he had attained.

The Greeks derived another advantage from the games, which they themselves considered as of much importance. Many of the Grecian states had acquired considerable wealth by commerce, and neglected no opportunity of carrying it on to advantage. With this view merchants resorted from every part of Greece to Olympia, and rendered it a mart for all the commodities in which they were accustomed to trade. Individuals had thus an opportunity of purchasing those articles which they could not procure at home; and the inhabitants of distant states acquired such a knowledge of each other's productions as often led them to form a commercial alliance, and engage in a regular trade.

Every person who studies the history of Greece must be aware of the advantage which we derive from the institution of the games at Olympia. This festival was repeated every fifth year. The period from one celebration to another was called an Olympiad: and the first is found by chronologers to have happened 776 years before the Christian era. Previously to the adoption of the Olympiads as a measure of time, the Greek historians are accustomed to record events as having happened in such a year of the priesthood of certain priests at Argos; a practice which, to us who have no means of discovering the succession of these priests, occasions much uncertainty respecting the period to which they allude. Polybius introduced the practice of dating the transactions which he relates by Olympiads. Succeeding historians followed his example; and in consequence, from the commencement of the period of which he wrote, we are enabled to ascertain with exactness the time at which every event of importance took place.

⁂ Several judicious remarks on the subject of this essay are to be found in West's Dissertation on the Olympic Games, and Goguet's Origine des Loix.

ON THE COUNCIL OF THE AMPHICTYONS.

Institution of the Council of the Amphictyons. Changes made in it by Acrisius. States which had the right of sending deputies to this assembly. Difference between the offices of Hieromnemon and Pylagoras. Concourse of people during the meeting of the Council. Object of this assembly was to preserve a connexion among all the states which were of Greek extraction. Oath taken by the deputies. The Council of the Amphictyons had the right of determining differences between independent states, and was entrusted with the superintendence of the temple at Delphi.

BEFORE proceeding to treat of the civil polity and manners of the different states of Greece, I propose in this essay to explain the constitution of the council of the Amphictyons; an institution in which all the inhabitants of Greece were alike concerned, and which, had the passions of men allowed it to produce its natural effects, would have preserved them from most of the disasters in which they were afterwards involved.

Deucalion, a king of Thessaly, having divided his dominions among his children; Amphictyon, one of his sons, instituted an assembly composed of deputies from each of the districts possessed by the descendants of that prince, and enjoined them to take measures for protecting from danger the states which it represented. The Thessalians, who had felt the advantages of such an institution, requested to be continued as members of it after going in colonies to other quarters of Greece; and thus, not long after its foundation, it comprehended deputies, not only from Thessaly, but from Attica and different parts of Peloponnesus. The regulations, formed by Amphictyon, being found inadequate for so numerous and important an assembly, Acrisius, a king of Argos, made various alterations in the constitution of the Amphictyonic council. He enlarged and ascertained its powers; fixed the forms of its deliberations; extended the right of sending deputies to those Grecian states which had not before enjoyed that privilege; and caused it to be considered as *το των Ελληνων συνεδριον*, or, as Cicero styles it, commune Græciæ concilium. According to the constitution established by Acrisius, the Greeks were regarded as forming twelve separate nations,* each of which was entitled to send representatives to the council of the Amphictyons. These deputies were not chosen by the whole body of a nation. The inhabitants of every independent state, comprehended under any of the twelve nations, chose their own deputies; and, however inconsiderable by the extent of their territory, might send the same number as the powerful republics of Athens and Sparta. Every state was represented by two deputies. One of these, appointed by lot, bore the name of ἱερομνημων, and was expected to attend to any business regarding religion which might come before the assembly. The other, styled πυληγορας, was elected by suffrage before every meeting of the council; and, being generally a man of ability, was entrusted with the care of the political or judicial affairs which happened to be the subjects of discussion. The Hieromnemon and Pylagoras gave separate votes in every cause decided by the assembly, and consequently each state had what was called by the ancients the right of a double suffrage.

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* The twelve nations seem to have been the Thessalians, Bœotians, Dorians, Ionians, Perrhæbians, Magnesians, Locrians, Ætæans, Phthiotians, Melians, Phocians, and Dolopians.

The office of president of the council was always held by one of the Hieromnemons, and gave him the right of proposing the subject of discussion; of collecting the votes; of digesting into proper form the decision of the assembly, and of prefixing his name to the decree. This office, important and honourable as it was, seems to have been determined either by lot or by rotation; since even on occasions when affairs of importance were before the assembly, it was exercised by deputies from some of the least considerable of the Grecian republics.

Though each state was expected to send two representatives to the council, it was not limited to that number. It is mentioned by an ancient historian, that besides a Hieromnemon and Pylagoras, the Athenians appointed two of their orators to attend a particular meeting of the Amphictyons. These extraordinary deputies had no right of suffrage; but were allowed to be present, and even to deliver their opinion on the subjects of discussion which came before the assembly.

The Amphictyonic council met twice every year. In spring it was held at Delphi; and in autumn at Anthela, a village at the distance of a few miles from Thermopylæ. In the same manner as at the Olympic games, the numbers who frequented the place of its meeting never failed to carry on an extensive commerce. Merchants repaired there as to the best mart for their commodities; and all who wished to purchase articles of consumption, which they could not procure at home, resorted thither, being assured of finding them in perfection and abundance.

The council of the Amphictyons was instituted with wisdom, and had a tendency to produce the happiest effects. By composing it of deputies from all who were of Grecian extraction, Acrisius endeavoured to inspire the Greeks with a conviction of their forming one great whole, and to interest them in each other's welfare and preservation. Amidst the jealousy and hatred to which mistaken views of interest or ambition often gave rise, its stated and frequent returns continually reminded them of their common origin; of the similarity of their language and government and manners; of the earnest desire of their ancestors to join them in amity with one another; and of the folly of wasting against their brethren that strength which they might need to exert against the many barbarous nations who envied their superiority, and were ever bent on their destruction. To impress these sentiments more strongly on the members of the council, every individual was required to swear that he would never assist in destroying any Amphictyonic city, nor in turning aside the streams which supplied it with water; and if any made this attempt, that he would oppose it by arms, and would use his endeavours to punish such an outrage. During the early periods of the history of Greece, the council of the Amphictyons seems to have often succeeded in infusing sentiments of mutual friendship into the minds of the Greeks. If schemes of conquest and ambition, or the jealousy of contending states, afterwards rendered all such efforts unavailing, we cannot deny its tendency to form the Greeks into one great confederacy; and have only to lament, that the wisest and most salutary institutions are too often unable to counteract the effects of the follies and vices of men.

Among neighbouring nations whose interests must often interfere, frequent dissensions will necessarily arise; and, without some means of adjusting them, must ultimately be terminated by the sword. To prevent the constant effusion of blood, which such differences would have occasioned in a country divided into so many states as Greece, the Amphictyonic Council was empowered to inquire into disputes of this description, and to inflict on the nation which had first given ground of offence, the punishment that it seemed to deserve. To the tribunals established in the different republics, it left the cognizance of the crimes of individuals. Its attention was confined to those violations of justice of which one state had been guilty towards another. This power it did not merely possess in name. It could impose a fine on any Grecian republic; could demand the assistance of all the Amphictyonic states to punish any flagrant act of injustice; and in case of disobedience, could exclude those guilty of it from a place in the council, and from the privilege of consulting the Oracle at Delphi. Ancient historians have preserved an account of some causes brought before this assembly, whence an idea may be formed of the nature and extent of the jurisdiction which it enjoyed.

After the victories of Salamis and Platææ, the Greeks, in testimony of their gratitude, decreed a golden tripod to Apollo, and appointed it to be presented by Pausanias, the general of the Spartans. On its being offered to the god at Delphi, the Platæans complained to the Amphictyons, that, in the inscription recording the cause of its dedication, Pausanias had assumed to himself and his country the whole glory of those victories, and had thus defrauded the other Greeks of their share in the honour of defeating the Persians. The council unanimously resolved that a fine of a thousand talents should be imposed on the Lacedæmonians; that the inscription of Pausanias should be effaced from the tripod; and that the names of all the Grecian states which had fought against the Persians should be inscribed in its stead. The conduct of

Pausanias had excited such universal indignation, that on this occasion the Spartans thought it necessary to submit to the decree of the Amphictyons; but it was not at all times that this haughty people showed the same deference to their commands. Elated by the extent of their military power, and the control under which they held many of the states of Greece, they were too apt to disregard the resolutions of an assembly which had no immediate means of enforcing the execution of its decrees; and besides eluding the payment of the fines which it had imposed, sometimes persisted in the very conduct which it had expressly condemned.

While at peace with the Thebans, they seized the Cadmea, or citadel of Thebes, and stationed in it such a garrison as held the city under complete subjection. Being accused by the Theban magistrates of having acted contrary to the law of nations, the council of the Amphictyons condemned them to pay a fine of five hundred talents, and afterwards increased it to a thousand. That sum, however, the Spartans never paid; and notwithstanding repeated remonstrances from the Thebans and the Amphictyons, for many years they kept possession of the Cadmea. Though in this and other instances the more powerful of the

Grecian states disregarded the decisions of the Amphictyonic council; there can be no doubt that by the exercise of its judicial authority it often prevented the necessity of war, and kept under restraint that inclination, too much felt by all the Greeks, to trample on the rights of those whom they could injure with impunity.

It was not merely from a principle of religion that the Greeks took an interest in the preservation of the temple at Delphi. The wealth amassed there, in consequence of the many valuable offerings presented to Apollo, flattered their vanity, by surpassing what was to be found in any other temple of the world, and formed a treasure which, on the invasion of any barbarous tribe, might be employed in providing for the public defence. From an early period the council of the Amphictyons had been entrusted with the superintendence and guardianship of the offerings dedicated to Apollo at Delphi. It met in that city or in the neighbourhood; it was composed of deputies from all the states of Greece; and its members, being changed at every meeting, had no time to form any scheme of appropriating to themselves what was sacred to the god. It was in the character of protectors of the temple at Delphi, and of the lands consecrated to Apollo, that the Amphictyonic council possessed the greatest power, and was most implicitly obeyed by the Greeks. Those who opposed its resolutions were thought to incur the indignation of the gods; while the soldiers who fought under its banners believed themselves secure of enjoying their favour while alive, and of being admitted after death into the fields of Elysium. In the Grecian history mention is made of three wars, carried on in the name of the Amphictyons against states accused of encroaching upon the property of Apollo; and in all of these that body was ultimately successful.

It is doubtful if, in the exercise of this branch of authority, the council rendered any real service to Greece. It perhaps guarded from dilapidation the immense quantity of gold and silver collected at Delphi; but often employed its power as the instrument of oppression. Under the pretext of protecting the rights of Apollo, its members frequently revived obsolete claims to certain lands as having formerly been dedicated to the god, and thus obliged the inhabitants either to abandon their property, or expose themselves to be attacked by all the states acknowledging the authority of the council of the Amphictyons.

After the Greeks ceased to be independent, the council had scarcely any other employment than the superintendence of the temple at Delphi, and probably sunk in estimation in proportion as the Oracle lost its credit in Greece. No historian has mentioned how long it continued to assemble; but there is reason to believe that its meetings had been discontinued a considerable time before the reign of Constantine the Great.

⁂ Those who wish for further information respecting the council of the Amphictyons may consult Ubbo Emmius de Concil. Amphict. in Gronov. Thes. Ant. Græc. tom. iv; Jos. Laurentius de Conciliis, &c. Veterum, in ditto, tom. vi; Potter's Arch. Gr. vol. i, p. 89; the preliminary dissertation prefixed to Leland's History of Philip King of Macedon; and an essay on the Council of the Amphictyons in the 5th vol. of Mem. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions.

ESSAY VII.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF SPARTA, AND THE LAWS OF LYCURGUS.

Situation of Laconia before the age of Lycurgus. Changes which he made in the government of his country. Power which he assigned to the different orders in the state. Assemblies of the people. Senate. Kings. Ephori. Means which he employed to prevent the introduction of luxury into Sparta. Equal division of property. Manner of cultivating the lands. Prohibition of the use of gold and silver. Public entertainments. ξενηλασια.

LACONIA, the most extensive of the districts of Greece, was about a hundred miles long and fifty broad, and possessed every natural advantage which its inhabitants could desire. The sea and the river Eurotas supplied them with variety of fish; the forests and mountains abounded in game; the soil of the plains was uncommonly favourable for the production of corn; and the wines made in the vicinity of Sparta were thought superior to any in Greece. Notwithstanding these advantages, the inhabitants were, for a long time, of no account among the states of Greece. Continual dissensions prevailed among the different classes of citizens, and no power in the kingdom had sufficient authority to quell them. About eighty years after the Trojan war, the Heraclidæ got possession of the sovereignty; after which period two descendants of that family reigned together at Lacedæmon. This division of the regal power served only to increase the public confusion. The kings, always jealous of each other, generally lived at variance, and were never sufficiently united to defend their authority against the encroachments of the people.

Things were in this situation, when Polydorus, the brother of Lycurgus, died without children. Lycurgus took into his hands the reins of government; but on learning that the widow of Polydorus was pregnant, he declared his resolution of resigning the sovereignty, if her child was a son. Accordingly, after the birth of his nephew Charilaus, he presented him to the nobles as their king, and from that time acted only as his guardian. The moderation of Lycurgus, and the ability with which he directed the affairs of the state, could not shield him from the malice of a party who envied the estimation in which he was generally held. Taking advantage of the disapprobation with which he often spoke of the government of his country, they represented him to the populace as a man who wished to subvert the constitution of Lacedæmon, and to concentrate in his own person the whole power of the state. Disgusted with the effect of these calumnies on the minds of the Spartans, Lycurgus took the resolution of leaving Laconia; but still indulged a hope that at some future period he might find means to correct the disorders which prevailed there, and make his countrymen taste the blessings of an equal and settled form of government. With this view, he employed the time of his absence from Sparta in visiting the states then most famed for the wisdom of their laws, and in idea formed the plan of a constitution which to him appeared more faultless than any that had hitherto been realized.

Soon after Lycurgus left Sparta, the confusion in the state arose to such a height, that all the classes of citizens united in entreating him to resume the management of public affairs. Availing himself of this favourable opportunity for accomplishing the great object of his ambition, Lycurgus returned to Lacedæmon; and having communicated to the most respectable of his countrymen the changes which he wished to introduce, obtained a promise of their zealous support. Lycurgus knew well that in an age so ignorant and superstitious as that in which he lived, nothing would contribute more to the success of his design than a belief that he acted with the approbation of the gods; and having gone to Delphi, asked the Oracle if Apollo was pleased with the government which he meant to establish. In consequence of the fame of his wisdom, or of the presents which he had brought to the priests, the Pythia returned for answer that she knew not whether to regard him as of human or divine extraction; that the gods accepted his sacrifice; and that under their direction he would form the most perfect of political constitutions.

This Oracle having been made known at Sparta, a few days after, Lycurgus, attended by a number of his friends, came armed into the market place of Lacedæmon, and announced his intention of changing the laws of his country. At first he met with violent opposition from the more wealthy and powerful of the citizens; but partly by the influence of the Oracle over the minds of most of the Spartans; partly by his forcible eloquence and insinuating manners; and above all, by that ascendancy which a great mind never fails to acquire over others, he soon obtained permission to model as he chose the government and laws of Sparta. The system of polity which he established, subsisted, with few material alterations, for upwards of seven hundred years; and is deserving of attention, not merely as a part of Grecian antiquities to which allusions are often made by the ancient historians, orators, and philosophers; but as an effort of genius to which few parallels are to be found in the history of mankind.

In this essay I shall first give a sketch of the political constitution of Lacedæmon, and shall afterwards treat of the laws, by which Lycurgus formed the singular character and manners, by which for many ages the Spartans were distinguished.

Two public assemblies met at Sparta. The one was composed of deputies chosen by all the inhabitants of Laconia, and does not seem to have been summoned except before the commencement of a war. This assembly regulated the number of troops to be employed against the enemy; the proportion to be furnished by the different districts; and the money which each of them was to contribute. As Lycurgus had no intention of giving the Laconians any share in the government of the state, this assembly seems to have been instituted not so much with the view of concerting a plan of operations during the war, as of reconciling the inhabitants of the country to measures on which the Spartans had previously determined.

The second assembly consisted only of the citizens of Sparta, and, besides occasional meetings, was held once every month. It had the power of electing all the magistrates in the state; of regulating the succession to the throne; and of enacting such new laws as might be necessary. Every Spartan capable of bearing arms had a right to be present in this assembly, but was not entitled to deliver his opinion on any subject of discussion till he had passed the age of thirty. Even then he was not heard with attention, if in the former part of his life he had ever acted inconsistently with the principles of integrity and honour. One day a measure of manifest utility was proposed by a Spartan of very profligate manners. When it was about to be adopted, a senator rose, and after reproaching the assembly for having listened to the advice of a man whom they could not esteem, caused the proposal to be repeated by a citizen of unblemished character, "that the Spartans," said he, "may not once incur the infamy of being guided by the opinion of a person whom they know to be destitute of virtue." This assembly had not the power of deliberating on what it chose. Before it met, the senate had the right of fixing the subject of deliberation; and the people could merely give or refuse their assent to the resolution respecting it, which that body had previously formed. Proposals were often made that the assembly should emancipate itself from this dependance on the senate; but the majority always thought it wiser to remain satisfied with the degree of power given to the people by Lycurgus.

Besides the political influence thus possessed by the senate, it was the supreme court of criminal jurisdiction in the state. Every cause involving the honour or the life of a citizen was tried by the senate; and so impartial were its decisions, that the parties rarely availed themselves of their right of appealing to the people. The senate consisted of twenty-eight members, exclusive of the kings; and no person could become a candidate for admission, who had not passed the age of sixty, and who through life had not maintained a character unstained by cowardice or vice. The mode of election was singular. On the day fixed for supplying a vacancy, some persons were shut up in a house, where, without being able to see the public assembly, they could hear any noise which proceeded from it. Each of the candidates being then brought in succession before the assembly, the people were desired to express the kind of estimation in which they held his merit. Those in the adjoining building marked the loudness of the different shouts, and he was elected at whose appearance the acclamations were thought to have been the greatest. The office of a senator being for life, and the most honourable in the state, it is not surprising that every Spartan viewed the acquisition of it as the principal object of ambition, and from his youth guarded against any action which might exclude him from so flattering a distinction.

Lycurgus continued the same division of the regal power which had subsisted from the conquest of Laconia by the Heraclidæ. He was unwilling to displease either of the kings by depriving him of what he deemed to be his right; and imagined that the mutual jealousy by which they could not fail to be actuated, would prevent them from uniting to subvert the constitution. On succeeding to the throne, the kings became members of the senate; and besides presiding there alternately, had each of them the right of a double suffrage. The kings were treated with much external respect by all the orders of citizens in Sparta. They had certain appointments for the support of their dignity, and were entrusted with the superintendence of many religious solemnities; but they had no share of the executive power, and were watched with such strictness as to have no opportunity of making any addition to their prerogative. In war their situation was more eligible. They had a right to command all the land forces of the state;

and while in the field, were entitled to make a truce with the enemy, to receive ambassadors, and to direct the whole operations of the campaign. In distant wars, they were frequently accompanied by a council appointed to act as spies upon their conduct; but were under no obligation to follow their advice, nor even to communicate to them the plan of their operations. When Agesilaus went into Asia to make war against the Persian King, he was attended by such a council, composed of Lysander and some others of the principal citizens of Sparta; but far from thinking it necessary to court their favour, he treated Lysander with so much coldness and disrespect, that this general soon returned home in disgust. At the end of a campaign, the conduct of the kings underwent a very strict review. If they had displayed any uncommon degree of courage or ability, they sometimes received the thanks of the senate and the public assembly; and if in any instance they had neglected the interest, or tarnished the honour of the state, they were censured with severity, and even suspended from the exercise of their authority.

Had the constitution of Sparta been formed merely by the powers which have been mentioned, the people would have had no sufficient security for the enjoyment of their rights. The senate and the kings, taking advantage of the heedlessness of a popular assembly, might have united to undermine its power, and by insensible encroachments have soon drawn to themselves the whole authority of the state. To prevent any such attempt, Lycurgus, according to some writers, and Theopompus, a king who reigned a hundred and forty years after the death of that lawgiver, according to others, instituted a magistracy of five, who, from inspecting the conduct, and watching over the privileges of the people, got the name of Ephori. These magistrates, the eldest of whom gave his name to the Spartan year, were annually chosen by the public assembly: during their continuance in office they were superior in rank, even to the senators; they were the only persons in the state who did not rise from their seats on the entrance of the kings.

The powers of the Ephori were various and extensive. Together with the kings, they acted as judges in all the civil causes which occurred in Laconia. They superintended the education of the youth; and besides being present a part of every day during the performance of their exercises, were expected to employ the most efficacious means of inspiring them with emulation, and guarding them against indolence and effeminacy. Citizens of every age and condition were subject to their inspection, and became amenable to their jurisdiction not merely when guilty of crimes; but any instance of meanness or pusillanimity, any action which eventually might corrupt the manners of the citizens, could be brought under their cognizance, and exposed those convicted of such conduct to be punished with severity. A celebrated orator was banished from Laconia for offering to prove that the same action was both right and wrong; and the poet Archilochus was commanded to leave Sparta, in consequence of having expressed in one of his poems a sentiment of cowardice. All the Spartan magistrates were under the control of the Ephori. Such of them as were suspected to have acted improperly, these officers could suspend from the exercise of their functions, could detain in prison, or could prosecute before the senate or the people. Even the kings, when proved to have violated the laws, were sometimes deposed by the Ephori, and though innocent, were kept under their authority by a singular practice. Every ninth year, these magistrates, having chosen a clear night, seated themselves in a field near Sparta, and observed the appearance of the sky. If, while there, they perceived any meteor of the kind, called a shooting star (and in a serene sky no appearance is more common), they immediately concluded that the kings had offended the gods, deprived them of their authority, and refused to reinstate them till assured of their innocence by the Oracle at Delphi.

The whole executive power of the state was lodged in the hands of the Ephori. They alone could summon the assemblies of the people; could propose the subject of deliberation, and collect the suffrages, or could carry into effect the decrees which either of them passed. They levied the troops appointed to be sent on any expedition; provided for their subsistence; and recalled them at their pleasure. While Agesilaus was in Asia, he received an order from the Ephori to return immediately to Sparta. At that time he had under his command an army far superior to any force which his countrymen could assemble, and was in hopes of obliging the Persian king to submit to any terms which he chose to dictate: yet he delayed not a moment to comply with this injunction, and at once to abandon all the prospects of glory and conquest which he had expected to realize. It was only at home that the Ephori were possessed of this absolute power. Two of them generally accompanied the kings in every military expedition; but in the camp they were under the command of these princes, and, however displeased with their conduct, could not punish them till their return to Sparta.

The Ephori were the only magistrates at Lacedæmon whose conduct, after the expiration of their authority, was not subject to any review. In the exercise of the absolute power with which they had been invested, it was supposed that, even when conscientious in the discharge of their duty, they might incur the displeasure both of the senate and the people; and that, as inspectors of manners, they might think it necessary to inflict punishment on actions, the pernicious consequences of which a popular assembly might not always comprehend.

To the institution of the Ephori, the Spartans were indebted for that internal tranquillity, undisturbed by any civil commotions, which, during upwards of five hundred years, they almost uniformly enjoyed. These magistrates extended their inspection to the conduct of every individual in the state; and by their summary mode of proceeding, could quell any conspiracy long before it was so widely diffused as to endanger the safety or peace of the community.

It has often been said, that the power of the Ephori was inconsistent with a free constitution, and admitted of the most dangerous abuse; but before censuring the institution of a magistracy, which some of the wisest of the Greeks thought essential to the government of Sparta, it is proper to recollect that the Ephori could never have any inducement to abuse their power. Besides that after the space of a year they returned to a level with their countrymen, and might experience from their successors the same oppression, of which they themselves had set an example, it is obvious that in a state like Sparta, where the people were ever jealous of their privileges, and had none of the usual occupations of men to draw off their attention from public affairs, any flagrant attempt of the Ephori to subvert the constitution, or infringe the rights of individuals, would instantly have roused the indignation of their fellow citizens, and have involved them in certain destruction.

Having delineated the political constitution of Sparta, I proceed to mention those laws of Lycurgus by which he endeavoured to form the character of his countrymen. In other states, legislators have contented themselves with deterring men from crimes by the fear of punishment. Lycurgus had a higher object in view; and by eradicating from the minds of the Spartans the seeds of vice, wished to lead them by inclination to the practice of virtue. To him it appeared that almost all the vices of men originate from the excess of refinement, and the luxury and effeminacy to which it gives rise; and that, by arresting the progress of his countrymen in civilization, he could preserve them in that state of society in which he thought the manners most simple, and the heart most pure. The means which he employed to accomplish this end, display the force and extent of his genius, and were contrived with so much discernment, that for many ages luxury, with all its consequences, was unknown in the republic of Sparta.

Had there been an inequality in the fortune of the inhabitants of Laconia, the plan of Lycurgus could not have been carried into effect. Wherever wealth is unequally divided, and a part of the community has more than enough for procuring the necessaries of life, some individuals will have so much taste or vanity, or love of pleasure, as to improve the convenience and elegance of their manner of life; others will follow their example; and luxury will soon diffuse itself through the state. Lycurgus was aware of these circumstances; and determined not only to introduce a perfect equality in the fortunes of his countrymen, but to bestow upon each of them little more than was sufficient to supply the wants of nature. Having persuaded the Lacedæmonians to resign their property to the state, he parcelled out into 39,000 portions the whole landed property of Laconia. Thirty thousand of these he allotted to the inhabitants of the country, and 9,000 he distributed among the citizens of Sparta. The portion assigned to each individual could neither be sold nor alienated as he chose. After his death, it descended to his son; and in the event of his having none, reverted to the common stock of the state.*

Had every man been permitted to manage the portion allotted him in such a manner as he chose, this equality of fortune would have been of short duration. In a country the soil of which is so various as that of Laconia, the different divisions could not be perfectly equal at first, and would soon have materially changed their original value, according to the industry or ability of those by whom they were cultivated. To guard against this source of wealth, Lycurgus did not allow the Spartans to take any concern in the management of their lands. The Helots, a set of public slaves, composed of the inhabitants of several little states, reduced under subjection by the Spartans, were alone employed in the cultivation of the country of Laconia, and delivered to each individual the proportion of corn, and wine, and money, allowed for the subsistence of him and his family.

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* If a Spartan left only a daughter, his portion seems to have descended to her, provided she married one who had no share of his own.

The portion of these received by every citizen was moderate; yet even from it the frugality of some might have accumulated wealth, and, in time, that wealth might have given rise to refinement and luxury. To prevent this danger, Lycurgus prohibited the use of gold and silver, and enacted severe penalties against those citizens in whose possession the magistrates should find them. Some kind of money was necessary for the exchange of commodities; but agreeably to the practice of the early ages of Greece, it could be made only of iron, and was so bulky and incommodious, that, according to Xenophon, ten minæ, a sum less than forty pounds sterling, required a waggon of considerable size to transport it. In Lacedæmon, besides, no man could derive any advantage from the accumulation of wealth. By a law of Lycurgus, every Spartan was entitled to ask from another whatever he happened to need; and he who refused to share what he possessed with those of his countrymen who stood in need of it, was deemed unworthy of the character of a citizen.

Had every family been allowed to live apart, men would gradually have wished to improve the neatness or delicacy of their entertainments; and, to gratify this taste, would have devised some means of eluding the poverty to which the laws had condemned them. The public entertainments, which Lycurgus put under the inspection of the senate, effectually counteracted this tendency to improvement, and from one age to another made the manner of living to be the same in Sparta.

At these entertainments all the citizens, and even the kings, were expected to be constantly present; and any person who for a single day was absent without some valid excuse, exposed himself to a severe reprimand from the senate or the Ephori. Nothing could be more coarse than the food to which in these entertainments the Spartans were accustomed: yet such is the effect of habit, that, even at so late a period as the expedition of Agesilaus into Asia, his soldiers preferred their own black broth to all the luxuries of Asia.

Lycurgus knew well that it would be vain to check the growth of luxury at home, if he allowed strangers to introduce into Sparta a taste for the follies and pleasures prevalent in the states whence they came. For this reason, he instituted the ξενηλασια, a law prohibiting the entrance of any foreigner into Laconia. Guards were stationed at the confines, with orders to allow no person to enter except on business of importance; and during the residence of the few strangers who were admitted by the Ephori, or came as ambassadors from other states, they were required to conform to the manners of the inhabitants of Sparta. For some ages foreigners seem to have felt no wish to visit Lacedæmon. The industrious and designing were not allured by the hope of gain; the gay and the idle were not attracted by the prospect of amusement: nor was it till the age of philosophy in Greece, when the ξενηλασια was less strictly enforced, that men of reflection became desirous of observing the singular effects of the institutions of Lycurgus. The ξενηλασια would have been of no avail, if the citizens of Sparta had been allowed to travel where they chose, and to import into their own country the manners with which in other states they had become familiar. Accordingly, no Spartan could leave Laconia without permission from the senate; and that indulgence was never granted, except to those distinguished by steadiness of character and attachment to the laws of Lycurgus.

Such are a few of the extraordinary institutions of the Spartan lawgiver. In theory, they seem well adapted to guard against the evil which he dreaded; and, in fact, during several ages, they prevented the slighest approach to luxury or refinement among any class of the citizens of Sparta.

⁂ On the subject of this essay the reader may consult Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus; Xenophon's Λακεδαιμ. Πολιτεια; Meursius de Regno Lacon. in Gronov. Antiq. Græc. Thes. tom. v; Cragius de Republ. Lacedæm. ibid.; Sigonius de Tempor. ibid.; Vindingii Hellen in Gron. Thes. tom. xi; Ubbonis Emmii Vetus Græcia in Gronov. Thes. tom. iv; and Voyage du Jeune Anacharse, tom. iv.

ESSAY VIII.

ON THE EMINENCE OF THE SPARTANS IN WAR; AND THE IMPERFECTIONS OF THE LAWS OF LYCURGUS.

Reasons why Lycurgus wished his countrymen to attain to eminence in war. Means employed to accomplish this end. Education of the Spartan youth. Infamy attendant on cowardice. Emulation among the citizens. Hardships to which every man was accustomed from his infancy. Unlimited obedience yielded to the magistrates and general appointed by the state. Superiority of the Spartans in war, while they observed the laws of Lycurgus. Imperfections of his institutions. They prevented the Spartans from attaining to the perfection of the nature of man; and occasioned an uncommon ferocity of manners.

HAVING established the government and laws which he thought most conducive to the happiness of his country, Lycurgus next directed his attention to the means of securing their permanence and stability. He had little to fear from any internal commotion. The ξενηλασια prevented the Spartans from imbibing political opinions inconsistent with those in which they had been educated. The Ephori * could at once suppress the seditious

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* The power of the Ephori seems to have been so necessary for preserving the constitution of Sparta, that it was probably instituted by Lycurgus himself.

designs of any citizen who might wish to erect an independent power for himself on the ruin of the constitution; and above all, the equality of fortune established at Sparta made it the interest of the great body of the people to maintain inviolate the security and importance of which every individual found himself possessed.

The Spartan republic was by no means so secure from external attacks. Besides the danger arising from the vicinity of the extensive empire of Persia, and the barbarous and warlike nations of Macedon and Thrace, much was to be feared from the other states of Greece. There was little doubt that, with their usual jealousy of each other's prosperity, they would be eager to annoy a state, the territory of which was at once extensive, populous, and fertile, and which, amidst the civil dissensions by which they were perpetually agitated, enjoyed the blessing of internal tranquillity. These were not the only enemies whom the Spartans had to dread. In consequence of having reduced to slavery the inhabitants of some little states in the neighbourhood of Lacedæmon, the number of their slaves was far beyond that of any other nation in Greece, and exceeded the free inhabitants of Laconia by several hundred thousands. These men never forgot that their ancestors had once been free; and watched with eagerness for an opportunity of asserting their liberty, and of avenging on their oppressors all the wrongs which they had endured. To guard his countrymen against this danger, Lycurgus conceived the design of training them to eminence in war; a plan which he was the more inclined to adopt, because, in consequence of his having excluded the Spartans from all the usual occupations of men, there was reason to fear that the want of employment might otherwise have been burdensome to individuals, and even dangerous to the state. The means which he employed to form this military character were in many respects uncommon; and exhibit the same vigour and comprehension of mind which his other institutions display.

Lycurgus was of opinion that instruction could have little effect in regulating the temper and manners, unless conveyed at that early period of life when the mind is most susceptible of impressions, and retains most strongly those which it receives. Accordingly no sooner had the Spartan youth become capable of exercising their judgment, than endeavours were used to inspire them with sentiments of magnanimity. At the public entertainments, where they were continually present, the conversation was often made to turn on the baseness of cowardice, the obligation under which every man lies to devote his life to the service of his country, and the happiness and glory of those who had shed their blood in its defence. Even on the most degenerate mind, such sentiments, when daily repeated, could not fail to make some impression. What then must have been their effect at an age, when the heart, as yet uncorrupted, was alive to every generous feeling, and still more when expressed by men who in their own conduct had exhibited the heroism which they recommended to others. The youth were not allowed to be inattentive to the important lessons thus indirectly conveyed to them. In the evening, when they supped in presence of many of the citizens, the director of their education was accustomed to ask their opinion of certain actions, or of the character of some of their countrymen. If they were at a loss how to reply, or if by their answers they showed themselves to have been uninterested in what they had heard, they were censured with severity, and exposed to the contempt of their companions; and if, on the contrary, they displayed an acute understanding and a generous disposition, they had the satisfaction of being applauded by those present, and of being regarded as the future supports of the state.

The ceremonies of religion, which in the other states of Greece had a tendency only to cherish superstition, or amuse the people by displays of magnificence, were employed by Lycurgus to impress the Spartan youth with fortitude and patriotism. In certain festivals, all the citizens were arranged into classes according to their ages, and made processions in honour of the gods whom they worshipped. In the verses, which they were appointed to sing, the old recounted their past exploits; those in the vigour of life professed their readiness to die in defence of their country; and the young made the most solemn protestations that they would never disgrace their character as citizens, and, as soon as their strength permitted, would strive to rival the fame of their ancestors.

The fate of the few who fled in battle, or had displayed any appearance of cowardice, was sufficient to deter the young from imitating their example. They were allowed to live, and were not even detained in confinement; but they were excluded from every office in the state; they could form no alliance with any of the citizens; they were not permitted to eat at the same table, nor engage in the same exercises, with the rest of their countrymen; they could inhabit only one part of the city; and, by wearing a particular dress, were marked out as objects of scorn and contempt to all who beheld them. So wretched was their situation, that in the first battle in which the Spartans were engaged, they commonly sought for certain death by rushing into the thickest of the enemy, endeavouring, by this act of desperate valour, to recover some portion of the esteem of their countrymen. In a state where such were the consequences of cowardice, how rarely would any example of it occur! It is the fear of death which makes men fly from danger; that renders them insensible to the obligations under which they lie to defend the safety and the glory of their country: but at Sparta this was counteracted by a stronger fear, by the dread of a fate far more terrible than death; and to escape from which, inevitable destruction became an object of desire.

Being aware of the power of emulation over the human mind, Lycurgus made it also contribute to promote the magnanimity of the Spartans. At a certain period three respectable citizens, appointed by the Ephori, selected 300 of the youth, whose business it became to surround the person of the king in battle, and to share in every enterprize attended with difficulty or danger. In this election there was no room for partiality. The reason of the choice of every individual was laid before the assembly of the people, and was drawn from circumstances in his conduct with which all were acquainted. From the time of this nomination there subsisted a constant rivalship between the band of the Three Hundred and the rest of the Spartan youth; the first performing a thousand acts of heroism to show themselves worthy of such a distinction, and the others displaying no less gallantry to prove that they had unjustly been deprived of an honour which their merit entitled them to expect. In vain did any individual hope that the defects in his conduct would pass unnoticed. Many, eager to build their own fame on the ruin of his, marked every instance of meanness or cowardice of which he had been guilty, and by the publication of it endeavoured to expose him to the indignation or contempt of his countrymen.

The character of the Spartans corresponded with the care employed to form their minds to sentiments of heroism. To them that situation was the most desirable, which afforded room for the greatest display of magnanimity; and the loss of life seemed amply compensated by the prospect of glory or the hope of contributing to the welfare of their country.

A Spartan being offered a large sum of money if he would not contend in one of the games at Olympia, rejected it with disdain. When, by much exertion, he had gained the victory, he was asked what advantage he would derive from it. "In battle," said he, "I shall occupy the post of honour and of danger." Before the Persian war, the Spartans felt such indignation at being required by Darius to submit to his authority, that they put to death the ambassadors who had delivered this demand. Being afterwards convinced that by this act of cruelty they had violated the law of nations, and had incurred the displeasure of the gods, they issued a proclamation, demanding if any citizens were willing to die for Sparta. Two Spartans, named Sperthias and Bulis, immediately declared their readiness to make this sacrifice; and having gone to the Persian court, informed the king that they had come to atone for the wrong done by their countrymen, and would submit to any death which he chose to inflict. Xerxes, who, though often misled by the violence of passion, was incapable of coolly embruing his hands in the blood of the innocent, returned for answer that he did not choose to expiate the guilt of the Spartans by the commission of a crime similar to theirs, and that they were at liberty to return home. Far from testifying any joy at the resolution of Xerxes, the two Spartans could not conceal their disappointment that they had not been allowed to show, by their death, the love which they bore to Sparta.

A detachment of 7000 Greeks, stationed at Thermopylæ, had for some days defended that pass against the immense army of the Persians. Having learned that Xerxes had been informed of a passage across the mountain of Œta, and would soon be able to surround them, they saw the necessity of an immediate retreat. In this situation, Leonidas, with 300 Spartans, disdained to fly, and, in conformity with a resolution formed before leaving Lacedæmon, determined to exhibit to the Greeks an illustrious example of the resistance which even this inconsiderable force could oppose to the whole army of Xerxes. Assured of the impossibility of their escape, the three hundred bade a last farewell to their friends; took a slight repast to prepare them for the ensuing battle, and rushed with alacrity to the attack of the enemy. After an incredible carnage of the Persians, they were at length overpowered by the numbers successively led on to oppose them, and fell in the same spot where they had begun the combat. Instead of pitying their fate, the Spartans regarded them as the happiest of mortals. Long after their death the youth burned with the desire of emulating their valour; and the fondest wish which a parent could express for his son, was that his death might be no less glorious than that of the followers of Leonidas.

At the same time that Lycurgus was desirous of inspiring his countrymen with sentiments of the most exalted magnanimity, he thought it no less necessary to give them the vigour of constitution and strength of body, without which, in his time, no degree of courage could be of any avail. To prevent the Spartan youth from being enfeebled by indulgence, he required that at the age of seven they should be taken from their parents, and educated in public by the state. One of the most respectable citizens was appointed to inspect their behaviour; and the young men most remarkable for their military skill and prowess were entrusted with the direction of the different classes into which they were divided. By them the boys were accustomed to endure hunger, cold, and fatigue; and were taught all the exercises which their strength enabled them to perform. After the age of twelve their manner of life became more severe, and their exercises more laborious. Their head and feet were constantly uncovered. In the midst of winter they were often required to pass the night in the fields; and when at home, were made to sleep, without covering, on reeds pulled with their own hands from the banks of the Eurotas. Every ten days they were inspected by the Ephori; and, if in their appearance or manner they exhibited any marks of effeminacy, were punished with severity, and treated with contempt. As an amusement, they were sometimes permitted to employ themselves in the chase of the ferocious animals abounding in the woods of Laconia, and for many hours every day were engaged in the most laborious exercises of the Gymnasium. These exercises did not form the business merely of the young. They constituted the chief employments even of the elderly citizens of Sparta; and the applause bestowed on the conquerors in games celebrated every month in Laconia kept perpetually alive the ardour with which they applied to them. All the ancient historians unite in bearing testimony to the effect of these institutions, and ascribe to the Spartans a strength, size, and agility of body to which the inhabitants of the other districts of Greece very rarely attained.

In many states the fatigues and hardships, more than the dangers of war, make men regard it with terror, and often induce them to sacrifice their interest in order to avoid it. To the Spartans, on the contrary, war was a kind of relaxation from labour. They were then employed in exercises less violent than usual. They might spend a part of the day in amusement, and were even permitted to bestow some attention on the ornament of their persons. At all times, accordingly, the Spartans were eager to engage in war, and willingly continued in the field as long as their services were required.

In consequence of the small number of the citizens of Sparta, Lycurgus wished the magistrates to be sparing of the lives of their countrymen; and with this view taught them to consider a victory as most glorious when gained with little bloodshed to the conquerors; and appointed a sacrifice of greater value to be offered by a general who defeated an enemy by stratagem, than if he had been victorious by force.

To form the Spartans to artifice in war, he made the food of the youth to be uncommonly sparing; but allowed them to supply this deficiency by carrying off whatever they found unguarded, provided they did not employ force to obtain it. If they escaped the observation of those whom they plundered, they were praised by the superintendents of their education. When discovered, they were punished, not for having stolen, which at Sparta, where every thing was in some measure common, was scarcely regarded as a crime, but for not having performed with sufficient alertness what they ought to have executed with dexterity. In ambuscade, accordingly, and in the art of surprising an enemy, the Spartans were unrivalled; and to these means they are thought to have been indebted for most of the victories which they obtained.

In war, all these qualities of the Spartans would have proved unavailing without that discipline and habit of submission to command which alone can enable a general to prosecute his operations with vigour and effect. Lycurgus was fully aware of the importance of such obedience, and employed the most efficacious means to enforce it. The Spartan youth were not merely required to obey the officers set over them by the state: every citizen had the right of correcting them for their faults, and might enjoin them to perform any action not forbidden by the laws. During the keenest of their exercises and contests he could command them to separate; and, if they refused, might drag them before the Ephori, and cause them to be punished for disobedience. So strong, accordingly, at Sparta, was the habit of obedience, that the kings submitted, without murmuring, to every command of the Ephori; and even the most illustrious citizen would have lost all estimation with his countrymen, had he, under any pretext, disregarded an injunction of his lawful superiors. In war, the beneficial effects of this were strongly felt. The Spartan soldiers were not accustomed to criticise the conduct of their general, nor to engage with coldness in an enterprise, because undertaken for reasons which they did not comprehend. They had no object but to understand the order which he issued; and, in spite of every difficulty, to carry it into effect.

The eminence of the Spartans in war bore ample testimony to the efficacy of the means employed for this end by Lycurgus. The Athenians, fond as they were of military fame, always acknowledged the superiority of that people in the field. By the dread of incurring their displeasure, the Lacedæmonians often disarmed the most powerful confederacies; and so much were they accustomed to victories, that they heard of them with indifference, and scarcely deigned to bestow a reward on the messengers by whom the tidings of them were brought.

Though the ability, with which Lycurgus made all his institutions conspire to accomplish the ends which he had in view, be deserving of admiration, it must be allowed that the principle upon which the whole of his system was founded is completely erroneous. In a rude state of society, man is little superior to the animal creation, and derives very inconsiderable advantage from the powers of reason by which he is distinguished. It is at the period when his understanding is enlightened by science; when he becomes capable of investigating the operations of his own mind, and the nature and qualities of the objects around him; when by his ingenuity and industry he changes the face of nature, and makes every thing contribute to the convenience and comfort of life; it is then surely that he appears in the most favourable colours, and approaches most nearly to the perfection of his nature. The study of science, so severely proscribed by Lycurgus, has no tendency unfavourable to virtue. It moderates the violence of passion; inspires a taste for innocent and elegant enjoyments; and banishes the desire of the vicious indulgences which, in a rude state of society, form the principal happiness of man. Even improvement in the arts does not necessarily corrupt the heart. In those who profess them they produce habits of industry and economy, and prevent the pernicious effects with which, in uncivilized ages, excessive indolence is almost always attended. If in the higher classes of society they give rise to luxury; yet luxury, that is, a taste for the elegances of life, is not in itself an evil. By giving employment to numbers, who in a ruder period would have had no means of subsistence, it increases the population of a country; and is vicious in those who indulge in it only when it occupies too much of their time and attention, or interferes with the discharge of the active duties of life. This then was the first defect in the institutions of Lycurgus. The evils which he dreaded from refinement of manners were imaginary; while, to avoid them, he counteracted the progress which society is perpetually making in the improvement of art and of science, and prevented his countrymen from ever attaining to the dignity and perfection of the nature of man.

But this was not the greatest error in the system of Lycurgus. The manners of all uncivilized nations are tinged with ferocity. The individuals of whom they are composed, ignorant of the rights of others, and occupied with the supply of their personal wants, think not of the demands which men have on the kindness of each other; while their rude employments, and the many hardships to which they themselves are often exposed, steel their hearts against the feelings of compassion and benevolence. Doctrina

> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

It is philosophy which points out the relations in which we stand to each other; which shows the advantages at all times attendant on clemency, and which thus softens the tempers, and humanizes the manners of men. The military character of the Spartans, and the wars in which it often involved them, increased the ferocity resulting from their ignorance of art and of science. Accustomed from their youth to scenes of carnage and horror, they became callous to the finer emotions of the heart, and knew not what it was to feel for the distresses of others.

From nature women possess a higher degree of gentleness, humanity, and benevolence, than men; and in barbarous ages have sometimes contributed to soften the ruggedness of their manners. At Sparta, women could produce no such effect. Educated together with the men, trained to the same exercises and hardships, they seem to have contracted no less ferocity. What shall we think of women who could rejoice at the death of their sons, if, upon inspection, they found their wounds to be honourable, and could even murder with their own hands such of their children as had fled in battle! The barbarity of the manners of the Spartans was such as these circumstances would lead us to expect. To secure to their citizens a vigour of constitution, they were accustomed to kill immediately after their birth the children who had any appearance of weakness or delicacy; and with the intention of inuring the youth to pain, they on certain occasions scourged them with such severity, that some of them have been known to expire. It is in their conduct to the Helots, those slaves whom they employed in the cultivation of the ground, that we behold the most disgusting display of a ferocity of disposition. Not content with having deprived them of liberty, they were wont to treat them with all the wantonness of oppression. They did not allow them to sing the hymns in praise of valour which formed the delight of the citizens. They annually inflicted on them a number of stripes, to remind them of their condition, and break the independence of their spirits; and they sometimes forced them to drink to excess, that they might exhibit to the youth an example of the effects of intemperance. The cruelty of the Spartans was often of a still blacker dye. They privately put to death the Helots, who displayed, uncommon strength of body or generosity of mind. To accustom the youth to stratagem, they sometimes placed them in ambuscade, and allowed them to murder the slaves who passed near the place where they lay concealed; and when the number of these unfortunate men threatened the state with danger, they have been known to butcher thousands of them at once.

It is shocking to dwell on such instances of barbarity; but they show the imperfection of the institutions of Lycurgus, and the importance of the study of literature and science to the moral as well as the intellectual improvement of man.

⁂ Much information on the subjects of this and the following essay will be found in Plutarch's Instituta Laconica, and Apophthegmata Laconica; Meursii Miscellanea Laconica in Gronov. Thes. Ant. Græc. tom. v; Ubbonis Emmii Lacedæmon Antiqua in Gron. Thes. tom. iv; Heraclidæ Pontici de Politiis Græcorum Libellus in Gronov. Thes. tom. vi; and Voyage du Jeune Anacharse, tom. iv.

ESSAY IX.

ON THE SITUATION AND MANNERS OF THE SPARTANS.

IN this essay, it is my intention to throw together such detached particulars respecting the situation and manners of the Spartans as seem to be most deserving of attention.

The power of the republic of Sparta, and the influence which she exerted over the affairs of Greece, did not arise altogether from the extent of Laconia, nor from the effect of the institutions of Lycurgus on the character of her citizens. At an early period of the history of Greece, the Messenians were attacked by the Spartans, and, notwithstanding an heroic and obstinate defence, were subdued by that warlike people. For some ages they continued to be the subjects, or rather the slaves, of the Spartans, and in war were compelled to follow their standard in such numbers as the Ephori chose to require. In a country like Greece, where the territories of the different states were small, and where their jealousy of each other prevented them from forming any strict alliance, the advantage arising from the acquisition of Messenia was great. In consequence of its being added to Laconia, the dominions of Sparta were more extensive than the districts of Attica, Argos, Sicyon, Corinth and Megara, and consequently enabled the Spartans to command a force far superior to that of any of the states of Greece. Epaminondas was aware of the importance of Messenia to the Lacedæmonians, and determined to deprive them of this source of their power. Besides the descendants of the original inhabitants who still resided in Messenia, numbers had at different times escaped from the tyranny of the Spartans, and had acquired some small possessions in remote parts of Sicily and Greece. All these Epaminondas, after conquering Messenia, brought back to the country of their ancestors. He rebuilt the cities which for ages had lain in ruins; divided the lands among all who were of Messenian extraction; and joined them in the closest alliance with the states most hostile to Lacedæmon. No measure could have been more fatal to the power of the Spartans. They were not only deprived of an extensive territory, and of a great part of the troops which they had been accustomed to employ; but they saw established in their neighbourhood an enemy whom no art and no length of time could ever reconcile; who, perpetually mindful of the wrongs endured by themselves and their ancestors, omitted no opportunity of taking vengeance on their oppressors, and eagerly joined in alliance with every enemy of Lacedæmon.

Many writers have erroneously supposed that Lycurgus wished to render his countrymen a nation of conquerors. Though desirous of forming them to skill in arms, he dreaded the effects of conquest, and wished to prevent them from extending their territories beyond the bounds of Laconia. With this view, he enjoined them never to pursue an enemy when flying; never to undertake the siege of a town; never to employ any naval force; and seldom to make war against the same state. Notwithstanding all these precautions, the Spartans were not always regulated by the moderate and unambitious spirit dictated by the laws of Lycurgus. Men so eminently distinguished in war naturally wished to reap the fruit of their valour; and after proving victorious in the field, were unwilling to abandon the glory and advantage of conquest. No sooner however had the Spartans begun their career of conquest, than its effects justified the foresight of Lycurgus in endeavouring to prevent it. The immense sums brought into the state by Lysander and Agesilaus changed the national character, and gave rise to passions which were before unknown. The Spartans, once so celebrated for their contempt of riches, became the most rapacious of all the Greeks, and were said by Plato to have acquired, by rapine, extortion, and oppression, a greater quantity of gold and silver than was to be found in all the other states of Greece. At first, the republic alone was allowed to possess any wealth; but the same permission was soon granted to individuals; and not long after the Spartans became one of the most luxurious and effeminate nations in Greece.

Even during the prevalence of the laws of Lycurgus, it was only the citizens of Sparta who were educated according to his institutions, and attained to distinguished eminence in war. Consequently, in all the expeditions undertaken by the republic, it became necessary to employ such a number of citizens as might overawe the rest of the army, and occupy the stations which required any uncommon exertion of valour or military skill. In such a situation what could be more foolish than the schemes of conquest in which, during the Peloponnesian war, the government of Lacedæmon began to engage? The waste of citizens which they necessarily occasioned was far greater than the youth of Sparta could supply, and soon reduced them to half the number fixed by Lycurgus. The loss of three hundred Spartans in the battle of Leuctra, was thought to be one of the greatest misfortunes which had ever befallen the republic, and spread such general alarm, that the Ephori readmitted as citizens four hundred who had fled in battle, and thus violated a fundamental law of Lycurgus. Notwithstanding the oppression with which the Lacedæmonians treated the Helots, they were accustomed to employ them in war, and at the battle of Platææ had sent seven to fight around the person of every Spartan. If on such occasions, these men acted with fidelity and valour, they sometimes obtained their liberty, and were even admitted as citizens instead of those who had fallen. Callicratidas and Gylippus, who by many signal exploits raised themselves to the highest honours and employments in the state, * are said by Ælian to have been the sons of enfranchised Helots.

The city of Sparta, like many of the oldest of the Grecian towns, was composed of five hamlets,

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* Lysander is mentioned by Ælian as having been of a similar descent; but this seems inconsistent with the statement of Plutarch, that he was descended from a branch of the family of the Heraclidæ

near, but not adjoining to each other, and had no walls. Lycurgus thought that his countrymen would not stand in need of such a protection, and that a consciousness of any other defence than their valour might lessen the vigilance, and unremitted attention to military operations, with which he wished to inspire them. In most of the states of Greece, the houses were small and destitute of ornament; but at Sparta they were uncommonly plain. During the prevalence of the institutions of Lycurgus, the Spartans despised every kind of luxury, and by the laws were obliged to form the inner part of their habitations of the coarsest materials. Some of the public buildings had been erected out of the spoils taken from the Persians during the invasion of Greece, and were not deficient in magnificence. Thucydides has mentioned a temple of Minerva, the whole or at least the outer part of which was entirely of brass.* In Lacedæmon, there was a theatre; but it was reserved for the exhibition of athletic performances. The dramatic productions heard with such rapture at Athens, possessed few charms for so rude a people as the Spartans, and were not even allowed to be exhibited. In a state where the slightest deviation from the conduct enjoined by Lycurgus was regarded as an offence too serious to be treated with ridicule, comedy was thought to be useless; and fears were entertained that while tragedy softened the heart, it might have some effect in enfeebling the courage of the citizens. The Spartans were taught to read and to write; but were strangers to all the sciences, and held them in contempt. Eloquence they considered as an art contemptible in itself, and useless to those who disdained to deceive. Among them, accordingly, all attempts to please the imagination, or move the passions, were unavailing, and commonly had only the effect of producing a distrust of the goodness of the cause which needed their support. The only compositions admired by the Spartans were such poems, as had a tendency to elevate the mind and inspire it with sentiments of fortitude and magnanimity. The Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, and the Odes of Tyrtæus and Alcman were familiar to them from their infancy; were sung by them when advancing to battle, and contributed to form that enthusiasm of valour which long rendered their attack irresistible. Though illiterate, the Spartans were far from being inattentive to their mode of expression. From their youth, they were taught to think with justness, and convey their sentiments with energy and precision. The other Greeks were struck with the uncommon felicity of their expression; and have recorded various examples illustrative of the style in which they usually spoke. A stranger was one day ridiculing the shortness of their swords. "Short as they are," said King Agis, who happened to be present, "they seldom fail to reach the hearts of our enemies." An Athenian was reproaching Plistonax, the Spartan, on account of the ignorance of his countrymen; "True," said Plistonax, "for we are the only people in Greece who have not learned your vices." A man, who had fatigued the Spartan king Demaratus with a number of trifling questions, at length asked him who was the most respectable citizen in Lacedæmon. "He," said Demaratus, "who resembles you the least." Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, being taken prisoner by Timoleon, was sent by him to Corinth, and continued to live there in poverty and neglect. Philip of Macedon having soon after written a haughty letter requiring the Spartans to submit to his authority, they returned for answer, "Dionysius is at Corinth;" expressing in these few words the folly of being elated by prosperity, when he had before him so remarkable an example of the fall of a tyrant.

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* From thence at Sparta, Minerva had the appellation of Χαλκιοικος.

So common among the Spartans was this manner of expression, that a style distinguished by brevity and force, thence acquired the name of *laconic.*

Music was a favourite amusement at Lacedæmon; but being entirely of a martial kind, could have no tendency to sooth the passions or humanize the temper of the citizens. Though in the age of Lycurgus it must have been of the rudest kind, care was taken that it should never become more refined. Timotheus, the most celebrated musician of ancient times, added some strings to the lyre, and had so much improved its melody and expression, that, on his coming to Sparta, the citizens were delighted with his music, and followed him in crowds wherever he went. The Ephori were alarmed lest their admiration of Timotheus should give them a distaste for the ancient music, and in a decree which is still extant required him to cut off the strings which he had added.

In the building where the Spartans assembled to partake of the public entertainments, was a number of different tables, at each of which there were places for fifteen persons. Before being admitted into any of these little societies, it was necessary to obtain the consent of all who sat there, that no person might feel uneasy from the presence of one whom he disliked. The conversation generally turned on the praises of magnanimity, and the glory acquired by the valiant; but sometimes was gay and lively. Even raillery was permitted, if made to cease as soon as the object of it showed any appearance of uneasiness. Besides being required to listen to the conversation of the elder citizens, the youth on such occasions had an opportunity of displaying their dexterity by privately carrying off what was placed upon the tables. At these entertainments, the principal dish was a black broth supposed to have been made of the juice of pork seasoned with vinegar and salt, of which the elderly citizens were so fond, that they seldom ate any thing else. Having heard it praised by the Spartans, Dionysius the elder desired a Lacedæmonian slave to prepare it: but had no sooner put it to his lips than he threw it from him with disgust, asking if that was the dish of which his countrymen were so fond. "No," said the slave, "it wants the ingredient of violent exercise before supper."

In all uncultivated periods of society, age is one of the principal sources of distinction. The old enjoy the benefit of experience, and it is only from experience that men can acquire wisdom or knowledge. At Sparta, nothing could exceed the reverence paid to age. The young were taught to rise at the appearance of the old, and to hear with submission and docility their instructions or reproofs; and no man below sixty could become a candidate for the rank of senator. During a public festival at Athens, an old man happened to come into the theatre after it was full, and went round the seats of his countrymen, without being able to prevail on any one to make room for him. On his passing near the bench allotted for some Spartan ambassadors who were then in Attica, they all rose to receive him, seated him in the midst, and showed him the utmost attention and respect.

When young, the Spartan women were taught the same exercises as the men, and were made to endure the same hardships and fatigue. After their marriage, they were exempted from the necessity of attending the Gymnasia; and notwithstanding the strictness with which the laws regulated every action of the men, were allowed to live as they chose.

For a long period, they were so far from abusing this liberty, that in propriety of conduct, and the discharge of the domestic duties of life, they were more unexceptionable than the female sex in any of the other states of Greece. In the age of

Xenophon and Plato, they had begun to indulge in luxury; and are thought to have contributed to that general corruption of manners which soon after disgraced and enfeebled the republic of Sparta. Though often ferocious in their manners, the Spartan women sometimes displayed uncommon dignity of sentiment, and exhibited examples of magnanimity which even the men were never known to surpass. A stranger who had brought information to the mother of Brasidas of the death of her son, lamented the fate of that illustrious general, and was calling him the most valiant of the Spartans. "Stranger," said she, "my son was a brave man; but Sparta can boast of citizens still braver than he." Those who are acquainted with the character and exploits of this amiable man, will feel the magnanimity of such a reply.

The Spartans were not allowed to employ themselves in agriculture or commerce, nor to practise any mechanical art. The Helots * cultivated their fields and built their houses; and the allies of Sparta were bound to supply them with the manu-

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* These men were often much richer than their masters, the lands which they cultivated generally producing a great deal more than they were required to pay for them, and the surplus being their own.

factures and arms for which they had occasion. Their sole employments consisted in conversing with each other; in hunting and the exercises of the Gymnasium, and in superintending the education of the youth. To men in a different state of society, such a mode of life would be tiresome and uninteresting; but to a Spartan it seemed the happiest and the most suited to a freeman. A Lacedæmonian, being told that an Athenian had been punished for not applying himself to any profession, expressed his astonishment that a man should be thought guilty of a crime because he lived agreeably to the dignity of human nature.

ESSAY X.

ON THE CHANGES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS BEFORE THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEMOCRACY BY CLISTHENES.

Situation of Athens when Cecrops came into Attica. Form of government which he established. Changes made upon it by Theseus, and after the death of Codrus. State of Athens when the power of the archons became annual. Defects of the laws of Draco. Use made by Solon of the power with which the Athenians invested him. His constitution of government overturned by Pisistratus. Manner in which Pisistratus and his son Hipparchus governed Athens. Tyranny and expulsion of Hippias. Democracy restored by Clisthenes.

DURING an early period of the history of Greece, the districts of Laconia, Bœotia, and Thessaly, often changed their inhabitants, and by their fertility and beauty allured various wandering tribes, which were successively expelled by others more powerful than themselves. The barren and rocky soil of Attica, on the contrary, produced nothing which could gratify the rapacity of an invader, and possessed few attractions to any who did not regard it with the affection which every man bears to his country. To escape from the oppression of a tyrant, Cecrops, an Egyptian, left his country, and landed with a number of followers in Attica. At that time the Athenians were in a state of total barbarity. They lived on the spontaneous productions of the earth; and were ignorant of the simplest arts, and even of the institutions most essential to the happiness of social life. Cecrops, who came from a country considerably advanced in civilization, and who possessed a sound understanding and insinuating address, soon acquired a complete ascendancy over the most respectable of the citizens; and on the death of their chief, whose daughter he had obtained in marriage, was unanimously elected King. Few princes have contributed more to the happiness of their subjects than Cecrops. He made them acquainted with the most necessary of the arts, and laid the foundation of the commerce with foreign states, which afterwards contributed so much to the wealth and power of Athens.

The wisdom of the laws and mildness of the administration of Cecrops, soon drew numbers from every part of Greece to Attica. With the view of connecting the inhabitants with each other, and of protecting them against the attack of any foreign enemy, he fortified twelve cities for the residence of those who were not engaged in the cultivation of the ground. In each of these he appointed a council, composed of the most wealthy and respectable of the citizens, and entrusted them with the ordinary administration of government, and the right of deciding all differences arising within the district. It was not the intention of Cecrops that the power of these courts should be independent. He enacted that their conduct should at all times be subject to the review of the sovereign, and that to his decision they should refer the most important causes brought before them.

Though specious, this form of government was attended with many disadvantages. The courts soon became independent of the king, and the inhabitants of the different districts considering themselves as forming separate states, were involved in constant feuds with each other, and sometimes engaged in war against the sovereign.

Theseus, who succeeded to the throne of Athens 300 years after the death of Cecrops, and who to the most exalted heroism joined uncommon genius and discernment, found his country distracted into a number of factions, and formed the design of correcting the error committed by Cecrops. Having gone through the districts, he convinced the inhabitants of the pernicious effects attendant on a variety of jurisdictions, and obtained their consent to place at Athens alone the seat of government and of justice. Theseus had no view to the increase of his own authority. Prepossessed in favour of a popular government, he lodged the power of enacting laws, and of making peace and war, in an assembly composed of all the citizens capable of bearing arms, and reserved to himself merely the right of being the leader of his people in war, and in peace of superintending the execution of their decrees.

Such continued to be the government of Athens till the reign of Codrus, the seventh in succession from Theseus. It being predicted by an oracle that in a war in which Athens was then engaged with Megara, the Megareans would be successful unless they killed the Athenian King, Codrus went in disguise into the camp of the enemy, and had the heroism to allow himself to be killed by a soldier to whom, with that intention, he had offered some insult. The Athenians, who, by the death of Codrus, had escaped the danger which threatened them, regarded him with so much veneration, that they thought no person worthy to succeed him as king. For a long period, however, his descendants, under the name of archons, held the chief authority at Athens; and except that the people had a right to call them to account for their conduct, seem to have possessed the same power as the kings. During the government of the perpetual archons, the Athenians are rarely mentioned by any ancient historian, and thence appear to have lived in tranquillity and peace. The crimes and misfortunes of men being the subjects on which history delights to dwell, it forms a strong presumption that a nation has been happy when its transactions have not been recorded by the pen of the historian.

The race of Codrus having become extinct, the Athenians took advantage of this vacancy in the hereditary succession of their princes to limit to ten years the duration of the power of the archons; and, about seventy years after, not only rendered annual the authority of these magistrates, but divided it among nine of their countrymen. These changes in the constitution of Athens were far from promoting the happiness of the people. The archons, who no longer possessed the same influence as when their power was undivided and perpetual, were unable either to resist the continual encroachments on their power, or to quell the seditions excited by different factions in the state. Besides, the laws, which had been sufficient for men living in the rude ages of Cecrops and Theseus, were found to be too simple for a people who had already made some progress in the arts and in commerce. Offences were daily committed against which no provision had been made by the laws, and in the punishment of which the judges, having no fixed rule to direct them, were often guilty of partiality or corruption.

To remedy these inconveniencies, the people conferred on Draco the power of framing a new system of laws for his country. Draco was a man of unblemished integrity, and sincerely desirous of promoting the welfare of Athens; but, from the austerity of his manners, and his ignorance of mankind, was ill qualified for executing so important a trust. His laws displayed an unnecessary and excessive severity, and were said by the orator Demades to have been written not with ink, but with blood. According to them, all offences were to be punished with death; the most trivial, because they deserved it; and the most enormous, because no punishment was so severe. It is obvious that laws of this description could never be carried into execution. The more enlightened Athenians were disgusted with their absurdity and injustice; and even the vulgar would have been filled with indignation, had they seen the punishment of crimes accord so little with their guilt. The confusion which prevailed at Athens was in no degree removed by the laws of Draco, and had even increased in consequence of the violence of factions which then distracted the state. The inhabitants of Attica had long been divided into three parties, whose political sentiments kept them at constant variance with each other. The poorer citizens, most of whom lived on the mountains, were desirous of establishing a democracy, as the only means by which they could acquire any power: the rich, who generally resided in the plains, wished to form themselves into an oligarchy, and to bring under subjection the rest of their countrymen: while the merchants and sailors who inhabited the sea coast gave their support to the plan of a mixed constitution, being alike afraid of the tyranny of a few, and of the turbulence and licentiousness inseparable from the government of the multitude. These parties had long felt a virulent hatred of each other; and without regarding the interest of their country, were eager to promote the success of their own schemes by the ruin of their opponents. The situation of the lower class of citizens at Athens added to the disorder and tumult thus prevalent throughout Attica. The whole wealth of the state having gradually accumulated into the hands of a few, many individuals were immersed in debt, and had either fled from their country, or become slaves to the rich. Emboldened by the numbers who were in a similar situation, and exasperated by the oppressive conduct of the opulent, these men had determined to join in an insurrection, and either to establish some kind of equality among the citizens, or to perish in the attempt.

In this distracted situation of public affairs, some of the wiser and more moderate Athenians suggested Solon as the only person who could restore tranquillity to the state; and so universal was the conviction of his ability and virtue, that all classes of men united in appointing him to reform the abuses which had crept into the state, and to establish the form of government which he should judge to be the best. No man was better qualified than Solon for becoming the legislator of his country. After applying himself in retirement to the study of philosophy, he had improved his understanding by a familiar intercourse with the wise men who then flourished in Greece, and by travelling into all the countries where the inhabitants had made any progress in knowledge or refinement; and though his integrity was unblemished, he had too much mildness of character to be guilty of the error into which the austere virtue of Draco had betrayed him.

Before making any change in the constitution of Athens, Solon thought it necessary to rescue the poor from the oppression of the rich. With this intention, he cancelled all the debts due throughout Attica; lessened the rate of interest, and enacted that, for the future, no debtor, to whatever amount, should become the slave of his creditor. At first, this measure excited the indignation of the rich; but as the necessity of it was apparent, and as Solon immediately remitted a large sum due to himself, they soon ceased to oppose it, and even expressed their willingness to submit to whatever other regulations he might choose to adopt. Of most of the institutions of Solon, the rich had no reason to complain. He left them in possession of their estates; he gave them an exclusive right to the principal offices in the state; and though he lodged the supreme power in the assembly of the people, by various regulations he endeavoured to bring it under the control of the higher class of citizens. There is reason to believe that Solon wished to form a constitution similar to that of Sparta; but from the mildness of his temper, he was unwilling to have recourse to the strong measures employed by Lycurgus; and he was aware that the equality of fortune, established by the Spartan lawgiver, could not long subsist in a country like Attica, where commerce had not only begun to flourish, but, from the barrenness of the soil, was indispensably necessary for the subsistence of the inhabitants. On being asked, accordingly, whether his laws were the best which could have been devised for his country, he replied that, though not the most desirable, they were the best which the Athenians would receive.

Solon had no sooner promulgated his laws than he was perpetually harassed by numbers of the citizens who wished him to explain, or alter, or amend them. To avoid these importunities, and to give the Athenians sufficient time to ascertain the excellencies or defects of their new constitution, Solon quitted Athens for some years, having previously exacted an oath from the citizens, that, during his absence, they would make no change in any of the laws. On returning, he had the mortification to find that the factions which he wished to quell had again revived, and that all of them were desirous of making some change in his constitution in the hope of acquiring an accession of power to themselves. Being far advanced in years, Solon was unable to speak in public; but privately entreated the leaders of the different parties to lay aside their dissensions and restore peace to their country.

Among these leaders, by far the most eminent was Pisistratus, at that time the chief of the mountaineers. To the external advantages of great wealth and illustrious extraction, Pisistratus added all the talents which qualify a man for rising to distinction in a popular government. His valour and skill in war were unquestioned; and had often been exerted in the service of his country. His eloquence was forcible and commanding; and his manners were of that fascinating kind which at once attached to him all with whom he conversed. Even Solon imagined that he could depend on the assistance of Pisistratus, and did not for some time discover that he was an artful, unprincipled man, who, under the semblance of moderation, disguised the most unbounded ambition. Had Pisistratus flourished at a later period, by eloquence and address he would have commanded every resolution of the Athenian assembly, and, without subverting the constitution, would have enjoyed the power of a sovereign. In the more turbulent times in which he lived, other means were necessary for attaining the object of his ambition. Having slightly wounded himself, he came covered with blood into the forum, accused his enemies of an attempt to assassinate him, and called upon the people to provide some means for his defence. The populace were filled with indignation at the danger to which they believed Pisistratus to be exposed; and, notwithstanding the opposition of Solon, appointed a guard to attend his person. This guard Pisistratus gradually increased, till with its assistance he seized the citadel, and made himself master of Attica. Though on this occasion Solon appeared in arms against him in the forum, Pisistratus continued to show him the most respectful attention; consulted him in every affair of importance, and, by his authority and example, maintained the laws, and even the form of the constitution. Solon, however, could not brook to see his country under the dominion of a sovereign; and, having no means of restoring it to liberty, went into voluntary banishment, and spent the remainder of his life in Asia. Could Solon have approved of any government which was not free, he would have admired the administration of Pisistratus. From every Athenian Pisistratus exacted the tenth of his income; but allowed him the secure enjoyment of the rest of his property. The part of the public revenue which remained after defraying the expenses of government, he employed in decorating Athens with magnificent buildings; in the advancement of industry and commerce; in founding a library for the instruction of the Athenians, and in providing for the subsistence of those who had been worn out in the service of their country. During a number of years, Pisistratus lived at Athens like a father among his children. He was accompanied by no guards; inquired with tenderness into the situation of all who seemed to stand in need of assistance; relieved those who had been unfortunate; supplied the poor with the instruments of their professions; and appeared to have nothing so much at heart as to render every citizen industrious and independent. In no part of his deportment did he exhibit any traces of the insolence which, in weak minds, the acquisition of power never fails to produce. Though in fact Sovereign of Athens, he expressed no displeasure at the insults occasionally offered him. On an accusation of murder, he came like a private citizen to plead his cause before the Court of Areopagus; and in the whole of his conduct endeavoured to make the Athenians forget the power which he enjoyed. Pisistratus lived thirty-three years after taking possession of the citadel; but as he was thrice expelled by those attached to the democracy, and spent a considerable time in exile, it was only for seventeen years that he held the sovereignty of Athens.

After his death, Pisistratus was succeeded by his son Hipparchus, a prince who even surpassed him in promoting the happiness of his countrymen. He remitted the half of the tax which Pisistratus had imposed, and exercised his authority with such mildness that, amidst the turbulence and faction by which, after regaining their liberty, the Athenians were almost perpetually distracted, they are said by Plato to have often thought, with a mixture of admiration and regret, on the peaceful and happy years spent by their ancestors under the government of Hipparchus. This accomplished prince devoted much of his time to the study of literature. In conjunction with his father, he collected the scattered fragments of the poems of Homer, and arranged them in the form in which they now appear. Anacreon and Simonides long enjoyed the liberality and friendship of Hipparchus, and from him the Athenians seem to have first imbibed a taste for literature and science.

After a reign of thirty-two years, Hipparchus was murdered by Harmodius and Aristogiton in revenge of some private injury, and was succeeded by his brother Hippias, a prince of ability, but of a tyrannical and sanguinary temper of mind. This disposition, which had been restrained by the mildness of Hipparchus, became more ferocious by the murder of his brother, and the fear of sharing a similar fate. During three years he governed the Athenians with all the wantonness of oppression; yet such were his vigilance and the number and discipline of his troops, that they must have continued subject to his authority, had not a fortunate artifice of the Alcmæonidæ * brought the Spartans to their assistance. The Lacedæmonians had no sooner restored Athens to liberty than they discovered this artifice, and felt so much indignation at being the dupes of the imposture of the priests at Delphi, as to form a plan of bringing Athens anew under the power of Hippias. This design, however, they found it necessary to relinquish. The Athenians declared it to be their determination to endure every extremity rather than submit a second time to the dominion of the tyrant: and even the allies of Sparta expressed their unwillingness to assist in reducing to slavery a state so illustrious as Athens; being probably desirous that in Greece there should be a republic from which they could solicit protection, if oppressed by the power of Sparta. On returning to Athens, Clisthenes, the chief of

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* See the particulars of this artifice, p. 34, supra.

the Alcmæonidæ, found that the factions which had formerly distracted his country were about to revive; but at length he succeeded in reconciling to each other all the parties in the state, and restored the government and laws established by Solon.

⁂ Ample information on the subject of this essay is to be found in Plutarch's Life of Solon; Meursii Reg. Attic. et Archon. Atheniens. in Gronov. Thes. Antiq. Græc. tom. iv; Meursii Pisistrat.; Fortuna Attica, et Solon, in Gron. Thes. tom. v; Vindingii Hellen. in Gron. Thes. tom. xi; and Potter's Archæologia Græca, book i.

ESSAY XI.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS.

Nature of the government which Solon established at Athens. Power of the assembly of the people. Precautions of Solon to prevent the influence of the orators from becoming dangerous to the state. Authority of the senate. Manner in which its members were elected. Πρυτανεις—Προεδροι—Επιστάτης. Principal magistrates at Athens, and power which they possessed. Archons—Νομοθέται—Ευθυνοι. Court of Areopagus intended to check the licentiousness of a popular government. Singular law of Solon.

WHEN Solon was entrusted with the power of framing a constitution for his country, he took an estimate of the fortune of all the citizens in the state, and divided them into different classes according to the revenue of which they were possessed. The first class consisted of those who had an annual rent of 500 medimni of corn or oil; the second, styled ἱππεῖς, because they were required to serve during war on horseback, had a revenue of 300 medimni; the third class was composed of those whose lands yielded only 200 medimni; and the fourth of such as either drew a smaller rent from their lands, or depended for subsistence on their industry. Only the first three of these could become members of the senate, or be elected to the more important offices in the state. Solon was of opinion that the poorer citizens could have no leisure to qualify themselves for transacting the affairs of government, and that the desire of attaining this distinction might lessen their attention to agriculture and the arts. To gratify the vanity of the Athenians, and reward them for their exertions during the Persian war, Aristides advised the people to extend to all the inhabitants of Attica the right of being admitted to the senate and different magistracies in the state; but though his proposal was adopted, the poorer citizens were so conscious of the propriety of the regulation of Solon, that few of them ever aspired to the offices which required any uncommon degree of knowledge or ability. Being desirous of introducing as much equality among his countrymen as he thought consistent with the welfare of the state, Solon granted to all who were of Athenian extraction the same right of speaking and voting in the assembly of the people. This assembly met four times in thirty-five days, and at these stated periods transacted all the ordinary business of government. When any danger threatened the state, or when some sudden emergency required an immediate resolution of the people, it was summoned by order of the principal magistrates or of the generals; and notice of the subject of deliberation was previously affixed in different parts of the city. The place where the people assembled was either the forum or the Pnyx, a large space in its neighbourhood, or still more frequently the theatre of Bacchus. It was purified by a sacrifice, after which a herald addressed a prayer to the gods, imploring happiness and success to the Athenians, and imprecating curses on any citizen who should be bribed by the enemies of his country, or should propose any measure inconsistent with its welfare. By law no business could be transacted in an assembly composed of fewer than 6000 citizens; but so great a number seems rarely to have been present. For some time after the re-establishment of the democracy, a fine was imposed on all the citizens who were not present in the public assembly. This practice having been discontinued, it was enacted that every one present might claim a reward of three oboli: a regulation which ensured the attendance of the poorer Athenians, and contributed in no inconsiderable degree to the influence which they possessed in the state.

The power of this assembly of the people was absolute, and extended to all the departments of government. It enacted laws, decreed peace or war, imposed taxes, elected the commanders of fleets and armies, and bestowed rewards on those who had contributed to the prosperity of their country. In a state where the supreme power was thus lodged in the body of the people, eloquence was an attainment of high importance. So numerous an assembly as that of Athens was not regulated, like the nobles in an aristocracy, by the dictates of prudence or of interest—it followed the impulse of the moment, and was always under the direction of the citizen who possessed in the highest degree the powers of persuasion. At Athens, accordingly, every man of genius and ambition applied himself to the study of eloquence, trusting that by eminence in it he might command the resolutions of his countrymen. Solon was aware of the influence which a few orators might thus acquire over their fellow citizens, and wished to prevent them from employing it to the ruin of the state. With this intention he enacted that no orator should be allowed to speak in the public assembly who was profligate in his manners, who had not discharged with fidelity all the duties of a citizen, and who was not possessed of such a fortune in Attica as would prevent it from being his interest to betray to any foreign state the liberty of Athens. Even these precautions did not appear to him sufficient. He apprehended that ambitious and designing men might have the art to conceal their real character, and might sacrifice their true interest to some imaginary prospects of wealth or ambition. To guard more effectually against such designs, he instituted the γραφη παρανομων, by which within the space of a year any Athenian might prosecute an orator for having proposed a measure found to be detrimental to the state. This prosecution was not carried on before the assembly of the people, who, from a regard to consistency, might be unwilling to condemn an orator for recommending what they themselves had approved; but before the principal court of justice in Athens, a body bound in duty to punish those who had betrayed the interests of their country. By artifice and undue influence, orators, even when guilty, sometimes evaded such accusations; but as, from envy as well as patriotism, numbers were eager to discover any ground of charge against those who had acquired an ascendancy over the people, it rarely happened that any man, however artful, could long escape the punishment which he deserved. In the public assembly the people gave their determination by stretching forth their hands towards the orator whose opinion they approved; and on one occasion, accordingly, when the speeches on the subject of discussion were not finished till evening, the decision was deferred till the following day, because it was too dark to distinguish towards whom the greatest number of hands was extended.

The senate formed an important part of the constitution of Athens. At its institution by Solon it consisted of 400 members; but after the Athenian tribes had been increased from four to ten, each tribe was allowed to elect fifty senators, and consequently an addition of 100 was made to its number. Agreeably to the equality supposed to subsist among the citizens of a democracy, the senators were chosen by lot; but care was taken that no person should be admitted who was not qualified to discharge the duties required of its members. Before any person was received into the senate, his character and conduct underwent a very strict investigation by the Court of Heliæa; once every month he might be called to submit to a similar examination before the assembly of the people; and, at the expiration of the year of his being in office, he could not obtain a crown, the mark of distinction conferred on those whose conduct was approved by the people, till he had shown himself to have acted with diligence and fidelity in the discharge of his duty. While exposed to so rigid a scrutiny, it rarely happened that any citizen proposed himself as a candidate for the office of senator, who was not conscious that his character could stand the test of the severest investigation. The senators met every morning, and, to indemnify them for the time which they spent in the service of their country, were allowed a drachma a-day. They possessed considerable power. Their decrees had the force of laws during their continuance in office; but did not become permanent, unless they were approved by the assembly of the people. The chief employment of the senate consisted in preparing the affairs which were to come before the public assembly. So numerous a body as met there was incapable of submitting to the drudgery of business, or of attending to the details connected with it. This task the senate was accustomed to perform; and brought every proposal in so simple a form before the people, that they needed only to signify their approbation or dissent. It had been enacted by Solon that no affair should be laid before the public assembly which had not previously been under the consideration of the senate; a regulation well adapted to check the rashness and precipitancy of a popular assembly, and always supported by the wiser citizens, though often disregarded by the people. They entertained little respect for a body which continued in power only for a year; which had no control over their decrees, and which was always desirous of gaining their approbation: and, without listening to its remonstrances, frequently required their presidents to submit to them affairs on which the senate had given no decision.

Fifty members being chosen by every tribe, the senate naturally divided itself into ten classes, each of which presided in its turn over the rest. The order in which they enjoyed this distinction was determined by lot, and the time of its duration was thirty-five days.* While in office the *πρυτανεις*, or presidents of the senate, lived at the public expense in a large building called the *Πρυτανειον*, and were required to watch over the interests of the state, and to lay before the senate the affairs which claimed its attention. As the Prytanes formed too numerous a body to preside in the senate at the same time, they divided themselves into five decades, or companies of ten, each of which discharged that duty during seven days. The ten who presided had the name of προεδροι; and one of this number, daily chosen by lot, was styled επιστατης. This officer was president of the senate and of the assembly of the people; and had the custody of the public seal, of the keys of the capital, and of the treasure of the state. So important was this office regarded at Athens, that no individual was ever entrusted with it oftener than once. Besides the functions which have been mentioned, the Prytanes, when desired by the senate, had a right to summon the public assembly; the προεδροι explained the subject of deliberation; and the επιστατης collected the suffrages, and announced the decision.

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* The Greek year being lunar, and consisting of 354 days, four of the classes of Prytanes continued in office for thirty-six days.

The magistrates annually elected at Athens, for no magistracy continued longer than a year, were numerous; but most of their offices were unimportant. Among the few elected, not by lot, but by suffrage, were ten στρατηγοι, or commanders of the fleets and armies of the republic, the choice of whom it would have been unwise to leave to the decision of chance. It has justly been observed that a popular assembly, though often rash and imprudent, will rarely be injudicious in such an election. A sovereign must often be misled by the representations of those around him; and, with the best intentions, may give the preference to a general very undeserving of his confidence. Of this error the Athenians would rarely be guilty. Their number being small, and all of them occasionally serving in the field, the military character of every individual was generally known, and consequently in the time of danger and alarm the command seldom failed to be conferred on him whose intrepidity and conduct in battle had most frequently excited the admiration of his countrymen. The magistrates who held the first rank in Athens were the nine archons, distinguished by names given them at a period when their power was far more extensive than after the change made in the constitution by Solon: the first, styled επωνυμος, because he prefixed his name to all the decrees and laws passed during the year of his being in office, had the care of widows and minors throughout Attica; the second, having the appellation of βασιλευς, superintended the celebration of the mysteries, and of some other religious solemnities; the third, called πολεμαρχος, exercised a kind of jurisdiction over the strangers who resided in Athens; and the other six, who had in common the name of θεσμοθεται, presided at the election of some inferior magistrates, went through the city to preserve order and tranquillity during the night, and, together with their colleagues, had the superintendence of various festivals and games in Attica. The chief employment of all the archons consisted in receiving accusations of persons suspected to have been guilty of crimes; in laying these accusations before the tribunals empowered to judge them; and in presiding at the trials to which they gave rise. The office of archon, though an object of desire to every Athenian, from the rank to which it raised him, and still more from its giving him a place for life in the court of Areopagus, was attended with little power. During nearly forty years, Pericles governed Athens almost like an absolute prince; yet he never happened to be among the number of those appointed by lot to discharge the office of archons.

Among the Athenian magistrates were a thousand and one citizens styled *νομοϑεται*, to whom was entrusted a most important duty. Solon, who knew the fickleness and inconstancy of a popular assembly, was afraid that in consequence of the suggestion of some orator, or the feeling of some inconveniency, the people might be induced to unhinge the constitution which he had formed, and substitute another form of government in its stead. Under this impression, he limited the power of the public assembly in its legislative capacity, and enacted that by its own authority it should not be entitled to abrogate any of his laws. When any citizen was of opinion that a law should be repealed, he was required to propose another in its stead. If the proposal was approved by the senate, the people referred the consideration of it to the νομοθεται, and in every case was bound to abide by their decision. This was a wise regulation of Solon. The νομοθεται were indeed a part of the assembly of the people; but as they acted under the inspection of their fellow citizens, and were afterwards accountable for their conduct, nothing except a thorough conviction of the inexpediency of a law could ever induce them to give their voice for its repeal.

The ευθυνοι, the only other class of magistrates deserving of notice, were ten respectable citizens, to whom all who had held any office in the state were bound to give an account of the manner in which they had discharged their duty. The strictness with which the ευθυνοι always made this investigation, and the severity with which they punished those whose conduct they condemned, were productive of the happiest effects, and may be considered as a principal cause of the fidelity and disinterestedness which the magistrates and senators generally displayed.

The court of Areopagus, composed of those archons who had been approved by the ευθυνοι, was the most respectable body in Athens. This court, the members of which held their places for life, had no share in the administration of government; but in consequence of the high estimation in which it was always held for wisdom and integrity, was allowed to form an important part of the constitution. When the public assembly had adopted a resolution fraught with folly or injustice, of which no individual durst propose the repeal, the Areopagus was accustomed to suspend its execution, and to remonstrate with such force against its impropriety, that the people often acknowledged their error and reversed the decree. A citizen who had been banished on account of some atrocious offence, had returned to Athens, and through the influence of a favourite orator had obtained a pardon: the Areopagus prosecuted him anew before the assembly of the people, and procured his condemnation. At a later period, Æschines the orator had been appointed a deputy to the council of the Amphictyons; but on a representation from the Areopagus, that it was inconsistent with the dignity of Athens to send as its representative to the council of Greece a man of profligate manners and questionable integrity, the people annulled the commission granted to Æschines, and nominated Hyperides in his stead. By these and many similar interpositions, the Areopagus moderated the power of the orators, checked the levity and precipitancy of the public assembly, and sometimes prevented the cruelty and oppression of which the Athenians were too often inclined to be guilty.

It was the intention of Solon that this court should promote a still more important end. Under some forms of government, virtue, though at all times the only solid foundation of happiness, to nations as well as individuals, is not absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the constitution; but in a democracy the loss of liberty has always been found to be an unavoidable consequence of the corruption of the morals of the people. Solon was aware of this connexion which at Athens subsisted between liberty and virtue; and as the most effectual means of giving stability to the constitution of its government, appointed the Areopagus to be guardians of the manners of his countrymen. To enable themselves to discharge this duty with fidelity and success, its members were accustomed to form the different tribes into a number of smaller divisions, and by appointing officers to watch over each of them, acquired a perfect knowledge of the character and conduct of every individual in the state. Conscious of acting under the perpetual inspection of a court unwearied in detecting, and rigid in punishing every shade of folly or of guilt, the citizens had the strongest inducement to be virtuous; and, with few exceptions, either desisted from the vices to which they were addicted, or concealed them under the semblance of virtue. As the character formed in youth commonly continues to distinguish men through life, the Areopagus bestowed particular attention on the education and conduct of the young; engaging them in useful and honourable pursuits; moderating the impetuosity of their passions; and inspiring them with reverence for the laws, and with sentiments of patriotism and virtue. All the Greek writers unite in representing the beneficial effects of this inspection of the manners of their countrymen conferred by Solon on the court of Areopagus; and no sooner from jealousy of the influence of this body, or from disgust at not being one of its number, had Pericles persuaded the Athenians to deprive it of this superintendence, than they ceased to be distinguished by the magnanimity of their ancestors, and soon after sunk into profligacy and vice.

One of the chief defects of a popular government consists in the turbulence and faction to which it is exposed. Wherever men are allowed to express their sentiments, they will form themselves into different parties. In a monarchy, the authority or influence of the sovereign will generally keep these factions within the bounds of moderation; but in a democracy, where no magistrate has power to restrain them, their animosities will often rise to such a height as may endanger the safety of the state. To guard against this danger, Solon declared that citizen to be infamous, who during any civil commotion should side with neither of the parties. The regulation appears extraordinary; but displays the same wisdom as the other institutions of Solon. Had virtuous and moderate citizens been allowed to remain neuter, they would probably have kept aloof from discord, and allowed factions to be guided by the most violent and headstrong of the populace. In consequence of this law, on the contrary, the most respectable Athenians were under the necessity of taking a part in every difference among their countrymen. By ability, and by that ascendancy which moderation and virtue have a tendency to acquire over folly and vice, they generally obtained the direction of the parties which they espoused;

and were thus enabled to restore tranquillity, before the zeal of the imprudent, and arts of the designing, had proved fatal to the liberty or safety of the state.

⁂ Those desirous of acquiring a more minute knowledge of the constitution of Athens, may consult Xenophon's Αθηναιων Πολιτ.; Ubbonis Emmii Vet. Græc. in Gron. Thes. Ant. Græc. tom. iv; Postelli Tractat. de Repub. Athen. Thysii de Rep. Athen. Disc. et Sigonii de Rep. Athen. lib. iv; the last three of which works are in Gron. Thes. tom. v; Potter's Archæol. Græc. book i; and Meursii Areopag. in Gron. Thes. tom. v.

ESSAY XII.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, AND THE PUNISHMENTS INFLICTED AT ATHENS.

Laws of Solon respecting the judicial power at Athens. The Areopagus the most ancient and respectable court in Attica. Mode of its proceedings, and causes in which it was accustomed to judge. Ten other Athenian courts of justice. Number of judges in them amounted to several thousands. Manner in which they were appointed. Power of the court of Heliæa. Mode in which accusations were brought, and evidence was taken, before the courts of Athens. Punishments which they inflicted. Ατιμια—Φυγη—Οστρακισμος. The institution of Ostracism, though apparently unjust, seems to have been necessary in such a government as that of Athens, and prevented greater evils than it occasioned.

NOTHING is more essential to the happiness of a people than a wise distribution of the judicial authority. Every individual, however distinguished by rank or virtue, may by the malice of others be dragged before a court of justice; and must often feel uneasiness, if conscious that his property and his life are at the disposal of men in whose integrity and discernment he has no reason to confide.

Like the other ancient legislators, Solon enacted many laws to regulate the administration of justice; and though some of them be liable to objection, yet there is no part of the constitution of Athens which, on the whole, is more deserving of praise.

From the reign of Cecrops, the Areopagus, the political influence of which has already been explained, had been the principal court of justice at Athens. Solon was aware of the advantage which his countrymen had derived from this tribunal, and not only confirmed its authority, but added to the power of which it was possessed. As was formerly observed, the Areopagus consisted of those archons who had discharged the duties of their office with fidelity and integrity; and its members, except when convicted of some crime, retained their places during life. The strict investigation made into the character of the archons before being enrolled in the court of Areopagus, and the attention with which it watched over the conduct of its members, joined to its rigour in punishing the slightest immorality of which they were guilty,* rendered this the most respectable tribunal in ancient times. Causes were brought before it from every state in Greece. So late as the age of Demosthenes, it was said by that orator never to have been guilty of partiality or injustice; and even after the Athenians had sunk under the Roman yoke, and had ceased to be distinguished by genius or virtue, this court continued to retain the same reputation for integrity. The Areopagus judged in accusations of murder, and the other flagrant crimes by which men injure each other in society; but could take no cognizance of civil causes, nor of offences against the state. Any person who wished to bring an accusation before the Areopagus, was required to submit it to the βασιλευς, or second of the archons; and after inquiring into the circumstances of the case, that magistrate stated them to the court, and had the right of being present, and of voting at the decision. In the course of every month, the Areopagus had three stated meetings, and often assembled at other times, when any cause demanded an immediate investigation. It commonly met during the night, that the attention of the judges might not be distracted by external objects, nor their opinions biassed by the appearance and manner of the parties. The Areopagus being desirous that its members should be influenced by nothing but the merits of the cause on which they decided; those who spoke before them were required to give a plain, unvarnished statement of the facts and circumstances on which they grounded their accusation or defence, and were interrupted as soon as they introduced any embellishments of composition, or attempted to move the passions of the judges. When the parties had been heard at sufficient length, the members in silence deposited their suffrages into what were called the urns of death and of mercy; and if the votes were equally divided, in allusion to the case of Orestes, Minerva, the tutelary goddess of Athens, was supposed to add her suffrage, and always to incline to the side of mercy.

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* The Areopagus punished one of its members for having killed a little bird which had flown for refuge into his bosom.

Besides the Areopagus, there were ten different courts of justice in Attica, four of which judged in criminal, and six in civil causes. Each of them consisted of several hundred judges, and changed its members every year. In the formation of these tribunals, Solon seems to have thought that the best security for the impartial administration of justice arose from the number of those by whom it was dispensed. A few judges may be bribed by the wealthy, and overawed by the powerful, or, even when superior to corruption and fear, may be misled by personal attachment to an individual;

but in so numerous a body as that of an Athenian court of justice, only a few individuals could ever be influenced, either by friendship to a party, or by the wealth and power of any citizen in the state. Accordingly, though frequently actuated by the artifice and eloquence of orators, the tribunals at Athens could rarely be charged with partiality or corruption. To supply the number of members requisite for the different courts, any citizen of irreproachable character, who chose to act as a judge, gave in his name at a certain time of the year to the archons; and of those who became candidates for this office, about six thousand were chosen and distributed by lot into the different tribunals. At Athens, about two months were annually spent in the celebration of religious festivals. During the rest of the year, the courts of justice met every day, and often employed several hours in deciding the causes brought before them. It was not in Attica that most of these causes originated. All differences among the inhabitants of the foreign dominions of Athens could be brought by appeal before its tribunals; a regulation highly oppressive to those who lived at a distance from Attica, but which the Athenians would never consent to repeal. Besides the advantage arising from the duties paid by the parties on entering the harbour of Athens, and the money which they spent during their stay, this mark of subjection flattered the vanity of the people, and obliged even the most disaffected of these foreigners to guard against any conduct which might excite a doubt of their fidelity. While the judges sat on the tribunal, they held sceptres as symbols of their office, and, on leaving the court, delivered them to the officers by whom they were kept, and received a reward of three oboli. Six thousand citizens being employed in the different tribunals, the administration of justice annually cost the state about a hundred and fifty talents (33,750*l.*), a greater sum than could easily be afforded out of the moderate revenue of Athens; but necessary for supplying the various courts with the number of members required by the laws. A few citizens might have acted as judges from the sense of duty or the desire of power; but no motive except the prospect of gain could have induced such a multitude to submit to so laborious an employment.

As the archons were presidents of all the tribunals in Athens, and were required to state to the judges the particulars of the cause which they had to decide, every accusation or complaint was first laid before these magistrates. If it deserved attention, they fixed the court before which it was to be tried, and bound the party by an oath to prosecute the accusation, and support it by evidence. If an accuser did not fulfil this engagement, or did not obtain the suffrages of a fifth part of the judges, he generally paid a fine of a thousand drachmas, and sometimes seems to have suffered even a severer punishment. When the law had specified the punishment of a crime, the judges had only to declare whether the person accused of it was guilty or innocent. If the punishment had not been fixed, the court, after finding the accused guilty, proceeded to consider what punishment he deserved, and proportioned it to their opinion of the magnitude of his offence.

Next to the Areopagus, the Heliæa was the principal court of justice in Athens. It was composed of 500 members; but on important trials, this number was often increased by the junction of some other courts, and sometimes amounted to 1,500. Besides judging in civil actions, the court of Heliæa was entrusted with the decision of many interesting causes. If any individual had endeavoured to change the religion of his country, or to corrupt the manners of the citizens; if he had attempted to undermine the constitution of the state, or to betray its interests, this was the court before which he was accused, and which decided how far he was guilty. In questions of this nature, the Areopagus was often appointed by the people to inquire into the particulars stated by the accuser; and after making a report to the Heliæa, left that court to pronounce sentence without interfering in the decision.*

In the plenitude of its power, the assembly of the people sometimes assumed the right of judging in those causes for the trial of which the laws had made no provision; but it commonly referred them to the Heliæa, and sometimes allowed its own determinations to be reversed or altered by that tribunal.

Agreeably to the genius of democracy, which considers all the citizens as alike interested in the welfare of the state, any individual might become an accuser of those who had defrauded or betrayed the republic; whereas in private causes no one, except the party injured, or his nearest relation, was entitled to apply for redress.

When an Athenian appeared as a witness in a court of justice, he was required to confirm by an oath the evidence which he first gave in public, and afterwards delivered to the judges in writing: a practice by which they had before them the whole amount of his testimony, and could easily convict him of perjury, if he prevaricated in answering any question afterwards put to him. In important causes, however, the evidence taken before the Athenian tribunals was generally that of slaves, and their testimony was always extorted by torture. Not to mention the barbarity of such a practice, and the impropriety of giving a slave any temptation to betray his master, it is surprising that so ingenious a people as the Athenians never perceived the uncertainty of the evidence which was thus obtained. While to be relieved from pain, the pusillanimous would often charge the accused with crimes of which they were innocent, men of generous dispositions and greater strength of mind would submit to every torture rather than betray those who confided in their fortitude and honour.

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* This circumstance may account for the mistake of those writers who have stated that Socrates was tried and condemned by the Areopagus. According to the laws of Athens, the Heliæa was the only court which could take cognizance of the crimes with which he was unjustly charged.

The punishments inflicted by the Athenian courts of justice were generally severe. By law, those convicted of sacrilege, treason, murder, or the more flagrant kinds of robbery, were declared to be deserving of death, and rarely underwent a milder punishment. A fine was commonly imposed on those generals who in a military expedition had disappointed the expectations of the people; and with the view of enriching the public treasury, it was often made extravagantly high. Miltiades, the conqueror at Marathon, having failed in accomplishing the object on account of which he had been sent with a fleet to the island of Paros, was fined in fifty talents, and being unable to pay this sum, was thrown into prison, where he soon after died.* With no less injustice, Timotheus, another eminent Athenian general, was sentenced to pay a fine of a hundred talents (22,500*l.*), and being equally unable to discharge it, avoided by flight the fate of Miltiades, and died in exile.

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* In Mr. Mitford's very accurate History of Greece, there is a note (vol. i. 2d edit. p. 374), in which the learned author supports the opinion of Bayle, that Miltiades did not die in prison. With all deference for so able a Greek scholar, I am doubtful if his reasoning be conclusive. From the passage of Plato, it is certain that Miltiades was not cast into what he calls the βαραθρον: but is it conceivable that the πρυτανεις would have dared, or would have been allowed to leave at liberty a person whom the people had sentenced to be confined in this place, and who owed so great a fine to the state? I apprehend then that though the πρυτανεις had the courage to disregard the order to throw Miltiades into the βαραθρον, which seems to have been a dungeon below ground, reserved for the vilest malefactors, this illustrious general was put in prison after his trial, and continued there till his death.

Among the punishments peculiar to the Athenians, was *ατιμια* or infamy. Sometimes, as in the case of those indebted to the treasury, it was merely a temporary disqualification from holding any office in the state, and ceased as soon as the cause was removed. Frequently, however, it was the punishment of perjury, or cowardice, or ingratitude to parents; and to a mind susceptible of feeling, was of all others the most dreadful. The person condemned to it lost for ever his character as a citizen; he was often reduced by the magistrates to slavery; and even when left at liberty, ceased to be under the protection of the laws, and might be wronged or insulted without any means of obtaining redress. This punishment, which to the Athenians was particularly severe, in consequence of the many valuable political advantages of which it deprived them, must have had the effect of deterring them from the commission of the crimes on account of which it was inflicted; but in other respects does not seem to be deserving of praise. One of the great ends of punishment being to reclaim the offender, it was wrong to exclude him from the hope of ever regaining his former station in society; and it was dangerous to leave at liberty a person whose situation could not be rendered more wretched by any subsequent punishment which his conduct might deserve.

The sentence of φυγη, or banishment, was passed on citizens convicted of holding a correspondence with the enemies of their country, and on those who, being accused of murder, or any other atrocious crime, and despairing of acquittal, had left Athens before sentence was pronounced against them. The parties condemned to this punishment incurred the forfeiture of the whole of their property, and were never allowed to return to Attica. To an Athenian, perpetual exile was nearly as formidable as death. In all the states of Greece, strangers were treated with harshness and contempt, and suffered still greater oppression when deemed unworthy of being ever restored to their country.

At Athens there was another kind of banishment called οϛρακισμος, to which men of eminence were frequently sentenced. As it was peculiar to the ancient republics, and casts considerable light on the Athenian constitution, I shall employ the remainder of this essay in explaining its nature, and the inconveniences and advantages with which the use of it was attended. When faction had risen to an alarming height, or when the influence of some ambitious citizen threatened the liberty of the state, it was customary for the people to have recourse to the practice of ostracism. At an assembly held for that purpose, every one present threw into an inclosure the name of the individual whom he wished to banish; and if the same person was named by 6,000 citizens, he was under the necessity of leaving Athens in a few days, and if not recalled, continued for ten years in exile. This institution, styled ostracism, from the tile or shell which, when inscribed with some name, was thrown by each individual into the inclosure, had been introduced by Clisthenes to prevent any future attempt to subvert the constitution from being equally successful as that of Pisistratus, and is said to have first been employed against himself. The banishment of Clisthenes was not the only instance in which the Athenians abused the power given them by means of ostracism. At an assembly held for the purpose of inflicting on some one this kind of banishment, a peasant asked Aristides to write his own name upon a tile. While writing it, Aristides asked him what injury that citizen had done him. "None," said the countryman, "and I do not even know him by sight; but I am tired of hearing every one call him the Just." The intrigues of the orators, still more frequently than the envy of the populace, drove the innocent from their country by the sentence of ostracism. Aristides fell a victim to the ability and unbounded ambition of Themistocles. Cimon and Thucydides, the two most virtuous citizens in Athens, were forced into exile by the artifice of Pericles; and, with the exception of Pericles himself, there was hardly an Athenian of eminence, against whom, at some period of his life, this decree was not passed. Independently of the abuse of ostracism, the institution in itself was grossly unjust. There is not a plainer principle in jurisprudence, than that every man is entitled to live in society without molestation, till proved to have forfeited this right by his crimes. What shall we think then of an institution which empowered a jealous capricious multitude to sport with the liberty of individuals, to expose to all the inconveniences of exile, men who often were innocent, and who, even when suspected of guilt, had no opportunity of justifying their conduct or adducing evidence in their defence?

Notwithstanding these serious objections to the practice of ostracism, it seems to have been necessary in such a government as that of Athens; and, with little variation, is said, by Aristotle, to have formed a part of the constitution of most of the ancient republics. On various occasions, indeed, we may conceive it to have been productive of the most salutary effects. Let us suppose that, during a war with some neighbouring state, the Athenians suspected a citizen to have formed the design, and concerted the means, of betraying some place of strength, or even Athens itself, to the enemy. There being no evidence of his guilt, and no magistrate having a right to imprison a citizen unless accused of some specific crime, how could they have guarded against the danger which they dreaded, had not the institution of ostracism enabled them to banish for a time the object of their suspicion? Perhaps their fears were groundless; but in every government, and still more in a democracy, it is just that the interest of an individual should yield to that of the public; that he should suffer some temporary inconvenience rather than that all should hazard the loss of independence. At Athens, then, the danger of being banished by ostracism was an evil resulting from the nature of the constitution, and was the price by which every citizen purchased the security and liberty which he enjoyed.

In another case, which must have still more frequently occurred, the effects of ostracism were found to be equally beneficial. As was to be expected in a democracy, many Athenians acquired by eloquence a complete ascendancy over the minds of their countrymen; and, when ambitious and unprincipled, were not always satisfied with this constitutional influence, but, like Pisistratus, on the ruins of the government wished to erect a permanent and independent power for themselves. It was vain to accuse such men before the people or the judges, a majority of whom, enslaved by their eloquence, and blind to their designs, would have attributed to envy any charge adduced against them. How important in such cases was the institution of ostracism, since by means of it 6,000 citizens, who loved their country, could at once banish the most popular orator, and before it was too late might thus prevent the destruction of the constitution. Did it admit of a doubt that in a republic the institution of ostracism would be attended with advantage, we have only to consider the history of Rome. Even before the final subversion of her independence by Augustus, she had become distracted into factions by the ambition of her citizens, and had successively fallen under the dominion of Marius and Sylla, of Pompey and Cæsar. Had the institution of ostracism formed a part of the constitution of Rome, these men would have been banished ere their power had attained such a height as to endanger her liberty, and the republic might have subsisted for ages after the period at which it expired.

This institution was unquestionably liable to abuse; but even then it perhaps prevented greater evils than it occasioned. A people so headstrong and impatient as the Athenians would not have allowed any citizen to incur their displeasure with impunity, and if unable to wreak their vengeance by so mild a sentence as ostracism, would have disregarded alike the forms of justice and the degrees of guilt, and might have condemned him to perpetual banishment or death. In fact, the punishment of ostracism was far from being severe. The person against whom it was decreed, though obliged to leave his country, incurred no disgrace, lost no part of his property, and might convey his effects to any place where he chose to reside. If innocent, he was, in general, soon recalled by his countrymen; and even when they continued to retain their prejudice against him, at the end of ten years he could not be prevented from returning to Athens; but regained the same rights which he before enjoyed, and was held in the same estimation as if he had not been condemned to be absent from Attica. A government, which needed the support of such an institution as ostracism, must have had many imperfections; but Clisthenes is certainly deserving of praise, for having devised so simple and efficacious a mode of remedying its most material defects.

Till the age of Alcibiades, the punishment of ostracism had been inflicted only on citizens of eminence. At that period, faction had risen to such a height in Athens, that an assembly was held for the purpose of banishing those by whom it was supposed to have been excited. In self defence, the heads of the different parties united their influence against Hyperbolus, a man who by low arts had acquired a considerable ascendancy over the populace, and was employing it to procure the banishment of some of the most eminent citizens in the state. At first, the people were delighted that Hyperbolus had fallen a sacrifice to the artifice which he had often exerted against others; but afterwards were so much ashamed of having disgraced the institution of ostracism by decreeing it against a person of a profligate and contemptible character, that the use of it was discontinued, and does not seem to have ever been revived.

⁂ The following works will be found to throw light on the subject of this essay. Meursii Themis Attica in Gronov. Thes. Ant. Gr. tom. v; Joach. Stephani de Jurisd. Vet. Græc. Lib. and Laurentii Disquis. de Rebuspub. Accus. &c. Vet. in Gron. Thes. tom. vi; Potter's Archæol. Gr. book i; Heraldi Animadv. in Jus Attic.; Sigonius de Repub. Athen.; S. Petit Leg. Att.; and Voyage du Jeune Anach. tom. ii.

ESSAY XIII.

ON THE APPEARANCE, PRODUCTIONS, AND INHABITANTS OF ATTICA.

Soil and productions of Attica. More populous than any country in Europe. Countries whence corn was imported for the subsistence of the inhabitants. Commerce of the Athenians. Whole power of the state vested in the citizens of Athens. Persons of whom this class was composed. Attention of the Athenians to commerce and the fine arts. Many of them more wealthy than the citizens of any other Grecian state. Manner in which the richer citizens found it necessary to employ their wealth. Their fondness for a country life. Government of Athens unfavourable to the industry and happiness of the poorer citizens. Magnanimity displayed by the Athenians in defence of their liberty. Μετοικοι entirely dependent on the citizens. Often reminded of their inferiority, and liable from trivial causes to be deprived of their property, and sold as slaves. Immense number of slaves in Attica. Manner in which they were procured, and prices at which they were sold. Ways in which they were employed. Slaves used with less barbarity in Attica than in the other countries of Greece; but far from being treated with mildness. Unfavourable effect of the prevalence of slavery on the character of the Athenians.

ATTICA, the length of which was about seventy, and the breadth nowhere more than sixty miles, lay in the form of a triangle at the southern extremity of the exterior part of Greece, and was the most barren of all its districts. Towards the south, it exhibited the appearance of a huge assemblage of rocks; and the soil of the Phelean plains situate near them, was a mixture of stones and sand, and incapable of any kind of cultivation. To the north, the face of the country is highly picturesque, and beautifully diversified with lofty mountains and deep valleys;* but the mountains are unfit for agriculture; and in ancient times barley seems to have been almost the only grain which the valleys produced in perfection. In the age of Solon, more of the Athenians were employed in pasturage than in agriculture; and at no period of their history did Attica yield a twentieth part of the corn necessary for the subsistence of its inhabitants. The soil of Attica was uncommonly favourable to the production of olives; and as the state gave every encouragement to their cultivation, plantations of them were to be found in all parts of the country.

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* In the following lines, Lord Byron paints in very pleasing colours the aspect of Attica:

"Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild,
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olive ripe, as when Minerva smiled;
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields—
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds;
Still in his beams Mendeli's marbles glare:
Art, glory, freedom sink; but nature still is fair."

Besides a number of vineyards laid out wherever the vine could be reared to advantage, the Athenians were accustomed to form artificial gardens on the declivities of the mountains, where they planted a variety of the fruit-trees natural to the climate of Asia. These plantations, in which earth brought from a distance was prevented from falling downward by strong walls built across steep and rugged ascents, required immense labour and attention; but were attended with surprising success. By means of them, many of the finest kinds of fruit abounded in Attica, and were thought to have a superior flavour to those in the countries whence they had been brought.

The latitude of Attica is nearly the same as that of the southern part of Spain; but the climate is far from being equally temperate and mild. During the summer, the heat is generally excessive; and, as in winter the adjoining mountains are covered with snow, the winds blowing over them occasion a greater degree of cold than might be expected in that quarter of the globe.

Though Attica was far from being fertile, yet in consequence of the purity of the air, the serenity of the sky, and the many advantages enjoyed by the citizens, it became more populous than any country in Europe. Great as is the population of Holland, the number of inhabitants on every square league of Attica was more than double what is computed to live on the same extent of ground in that country.

To provide subsistence for so numerous a population, the Athenians annually imported a great quantity of corn. Part of this they brought from Ægypt and Sicily, but purchased the most of it in the Chersonesus Taurica.* The passage to this peninsula being through the Bosphorus of Thrace, and across the Euxine sea, was tedious and dangerous; but corn could be bought there at a cheaper rate than in the Mediterranean; and the sovereign of the country finding it his interest to live in friendship, did not require so high duties as the other states with which they traded. Besides corn, the inhabitants of Attica were wont to import from foreign countries a great variety of commodities. From Thrace and the coasts of the Euxine, they brought wood, salt, and leather;

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* From Demosthenes we learn that the quantity of corn annually imported from the Crimea was 400,000 medimni. The medimnus was a measure containing about four bushels.

from Phrygia and Miletus, a quantity of rich stuffs and the wool which they employed in their finer manufactures; and from the islands in the Ægean Sea, wine and various kinds of fruit. A part of these articles they purchased with the produce of the silver mines at Laurium in Attica; but most of them they obtained in exchange for commodities exported from Athens. The oil produced from the great quantity of olives raised by the Athenians; their manufactures of arms, cloth, and furniture, and even the books published by their countrymen, were held in high estimation among all the states of Ionia, and by many of the nations of Greece, and formed very profitable articles of commerce. These different branches were alike open to all the citizens of Athens; nor could the most powerful or popular individuals ever persuade the public assembly to grant them a monopoly of any commodities whatever.

The Athenian merchants often found it necessary to borrow considerable sums for completing the cargoes which they sent to foreign countries. The interest of money lent for this purpose was generally thirty per cent. Even when the lender was in no hazard of losing the principal, it seems to have sometimes been sixteen, and seldom below twelve per cent. Banks founded on nearly the same principles as in modern times were established in Athens, and appear to have transacted business to a very considerable extent.

The principal class of the inhabitants of Attica, was that of citizens, men entitled to be present in the assembly of the people,* and to share in the government of the state. It had been enacted by Solon, that no person should have a right to the character of a citizen both of whose parents were not Athenians, a law which had fallen so completely into desuetude, that Themistocles and Cimon, though repeatedly elected by the people to the important office of ϛρατηγοι, were both, by the mother's side, of foreign extraction. When possessed of the chief influence at Athens, Pericles persuaded the public assembly to revive the regulation of Solon, and carried it into execution with such rigour, that more than five hundred persons were deprived of the right of citizens; and those found to have employed any fraudulent means to obtain this distinction were sold as slaves. After Pericles had lost all his legitimate children by the plague, he proposed that the law of Solon should be repealed; and the Athenians thinking his domestic misfortunes a sufficient punishment for his severity, consented to rescind it, and to enrol among the citizens a son whom he had by Aspasia. On the banishment of the thirty tyrants, this law was re-enacted through the influence of the orator Aristophon; but does not seem to have long continued in force.

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* A citizen had a right to be present in the public assembly after the age of twenty. Any stranger found there was considered as having usurped a part of the sovereign power, and as guilty of a capital crime.

The Athenian citizens capable of bearing arms generally amounted to about 20,000; and this number is mentioned by Plato as best adapted to the extent of Attica. When the population of the state had been considerably lessened by war or disease, the Athenians were accustomed to enrol as citizens a number of the strangers residing with their families at Athens; and when it increased beyond the usual amount, colonies were sent to the countries where they could most easily found a settlement.

After the Athenians became the most illustrious state in Greece, the character of a citizen of Athens was sought by foreigners as a mark of distinction; and acquired additional importance from having been refused to Mena, a Thessalian, who once had assisted them with two hundred horse, and even to Perdiccas King of Macedon, who was their ally during the Persian war. Many precautions were taken to prevent this honour from being conferred on any who by their merit or their services to the state had not deserved it. After being decreed by the people, it was void, if not confirmed by another assembly composed of at least 6,000 citizens, whose suffrages were given by ballot, and even then might be annulled by one of the courts of judicature if found to have been granted to one who was unworthy of such a distinction.

In Sparta and some other states of Greece, a citizen was thought to be disgraced, if he practised any of the arts. At Athens, the case was different. Being aware of the pernicious effect of indolence on the nature of man, Solon required every Athenian to engage in some profession; and enacted that a father who had bred his son to no employment, should not be entitled to demand his assistance, if in old age he were reduced to indigence. In consequence of this, there are few states in which industry has been so common among the higher class of citizens as at Athens. Some employed a number of slaves in different manufactures. Others engaged in commerce; and many obtained permission to work the silver mines at Laurium. All were not equally successful; but by industry a great proportion of the citizens acquired fortunes superior to what were possessed by individuals in almost any other part of Greece. There is reason to think that many Athenians had property to the value of 4,000*l.* of our money. Alcibiades was left by his father upwards of 20,000*l.*; and the fortune of Hipponicus, thought to be the richest of the Greeks, was nearly double that amount. When compared with the immense fortunes amassed in modern times, these sums appear inconsiderable; but besides that in democracies there ought to be less inequality of fortune than under other forms of government, gold and silver were at least six or seven times more valuable than at present. To give employment to those citizens who had inherited an independent fortune, and were not inclined to be concerned in manufactures or commerce, Solon declared painting and statuary to be liberal arts, enacting that they should never be practised by slaves. In consequence of this regulation, the practice of these elegant arts formed the occupation of many wealthy Athenians, and the study of them came to be considered as essential to a liberal education. Few perhaps attained to eminence; but the public taste became refined, and artists found it necessasy to give the highest polish to their productions, when they were to be judged by men familiarly acquainted with the principles on which the beauty of such works depends.

At Athens, the richer citizens were not allowed to waste their wealth entirely on their own gratification. In consequence of the equality of rights and of power subsisting among all the members of the republic, they found themselves the constant objects of the jealousy and envy of the poor; and if desirous of obtaining any of the offices and honours conferred by the people, or even of escaping the effects of their displeasure, were obliged to guard against any ostentatious display of opulence, to behave with kindness and condescension to the most indigent, and to spend a considerable part of their fortune in the service of the state, or in contributing to the public amusement. Cimon, the first Athenian who after the restoration of the democracy attained to opulence, was accustomed to employ it in a manner of which there is no example under any other form of government. He threw down the fences of his gardens and orchards, and rendered them the property of the public. He made welcome to his house and his table the lowest, as well as the most eminent of the citizens. He inquired into the situation of the indigent, and with delicacy and kindness pressed them to accept his assistance. At his own expense he built many of the porticoes and public edifices which decorated Athens and the groves around it; and, in the use which he made of his wealth, seemed to be less desirous of gratifying himself than his countrymen. Those of the rich who did not act with the same liberality or prudence as Cimon, were not allowed to enjoy their wealth with the same security. Every accusation against them was heard with avidity; and under the most trivial pretexts, and most groundless suspicions, they were often thrown into prison, or stripped of their property, or banished from the state. In the Συμποσιον of Xenophon, an Athenian of the name of Charmides gives a curious view of the situation of the rich at Athens; and there is no reason to suppose that the picture, which he draws of it, is too strongly coloured. "When wealthy," says he, "I was exposed to perpetual demands for the support of government, or the expenses of the theatre. I could not go beyond the confines of Attica without incurring the suspicion of the magistrates; and was obliged to court the favour of the vilest informers, from the conviction that at any time they could occasion my ruin. Now, on the contrary, that I have become poor, I go where I choose; I am treated with respect and deference by the rich, who regard me with the same terror which I once felt for others; and when in want, I can require the state to support me." In such a state of things, the rich seem to have had no attachment to the form of government subsisting at Athens; and, while they professed the utmost zeal for the interest of their country, were always ready to adopt any measure by which they might acquire an independent power for themselves. Most of the Athenians were fond of a country life. This fondness had probably originated from the number of citizens who, in consequence of the uneven surface of Attica, were accustomed to spend their time in the tending of flocks, and was heightened by the many pleasing and romantic spots in which that district abounds. Among the rich this taste universally prevailed. In the country, they were less under the view of their fellow citizens, and could live with a degree of elegance which at Athens it would have been dangerous to assume. Consequently, the richer Athenians, when unemployed in the duties of any magistracy, were seldom seen at Athens, except when they came to share in the public amusements, or to be present at an assembly of the people.

The democratical government of Athens was favourable to the display of genius in every class of men, and often enabled persons of the meanest condition to obtain the first offices in the state: but in general, it does not seem to have contributed either to the happiness or virtue of the poor. The importance of which they found themselves possessed as judges, and as members of the public assembly, made them dissatisfied with their inferiority in wealth to the rich, and unwilling to submit to the industry and labour by which their situation might have been improved. Many of them subsisted on the trifling pittance paid out of the public treasury to the citizens who needed such assistance, and were ready to become the tools of any factious demagogue through whom they might share in the plunder of the rich.

Notwithstanding the animosity against each other in which, during peace, the rich and the poor at Athens generally indulged, such was their love of independence and dread of a foreign yoke, that as soon as any danger threatened the state, these parties suspended their dissensions, and uniting together in its defence, displayed a patriotism and magnanimity which even the Spartans never surpassed.

After being driven from Attica, Hippias implored the protection of the Persian king; and

Darius, who had been exasperated against the Athenians for having made an incursion into his dominions in Asia, sent an embassy requiring them to reinstate him in his authority. This demand having been treated with contempt, a Persian army of more than a hundred thousand men soon after landed in Attica; but in no degree intimidated the Athenians. Resolved to maintain their independence, they marched against the enemy; and, without waiting for the support of their allies, dared to encounter an army ten times more numerous than their own. Nine years after the victory at Marathon, Xerxes, the successor of Darius, ashamed that a handful of Greeks had put to flight the powerful armament sent to enslave them, led an immense army across the Hellespont, and made the Athenians the most flattering offers, if they would assist him in bringing under subjection the rest of the Greeks. Though deserted by their allies, who had resolved to fortify Peloponnesus, and to leave the exterior parts of Greece to their fate; the Athenians unanimously determined to form no alliance with the enemy of the liberties of Greece. Athens being imperfectly fortified, and unable for any length of time to resist the attack of the Persians, the Athenians adopted the magnanimous resolution of abandon-ing Attica; and, having sent their wives and children to a place of security in the extremity of Greece, went themselves aboard the fleet commanded by Themistocles. If we consider the enthusiastic fondness felt by the Greeks for the spot which had given them birth, and in which they spent their early years; and the veneration in which they held the trophies of their ancestors, the tombs of their fathers, and the temples of their gods; we may conceive the force of the principle which made them leave such objects in the power of the enemy. It was not merely during the invasion of the Persians that the Athenians displayed this ardent love of liberty. After Athens was compelled to yield to the power of Sparta, and had sunk under the government of the thirty tyrants, her citizens were unwearied in their efforts to regain independence, and by magnanimity and perseverance soon restored the democracy. Even during the reign of Philip of Macedon, when they seemed lost in effeminacy and voluptuousness, the danger which threatened their liberty animated them in the battle of Chæronea with a heroism which nothing but the unskilfulness of their generals could have disappointed of success. Besides the love of independence, fostered from one generation to another, in the heart of every

Athenian, the fate of those Grecian states, which fell under the dominion of tyrants, kept alive the enthusiasm with which he fought in its defence. Alarmed by a conviction that their subjects were perpetually watching an opportunity of regaining their liberty, and still more by a fear of assassination, at all times too common in Greece, and against a tyrant even deemed meritorious; these usurpers were wont to maintain their power by acts of cruelty not surpassed by a Caligula or a Nero. The barbarities of Hippias, of Alexander of Pheræ, and Dionysius of Corinth, were continually present to the mind of an Athenian, and warned him of the certain misery to himself and his country with which the subversion of its liberty would be attended.

The second class of the inhabitants of Attica were the *μετοικοι*, or strangers, who, from different causes had left their native countries, and chose to reside at Athens. By an ancient writer they are said to have generally amounted to 10,000; and there is reason to think that he assigns this as the number capable of bearing arms. They had no share in the administration of the state; and were under the necessity of submitting to any regulations, however oppressive, which the citizens thought fit to enact. The Athenians were far from being mild in the exercise of power. Like every popular assembly, they were fond of displaying their superiority, and made the μετοικοι feel all the dependance of the situation in which they lived. At particular festivals these men, in token of subjection, were required to perform certain menial offices, and on such occasions were frequently insulted by the populace. Before the courts of justice they could transact no business for themselves, but were protected from oppression by a patron whom they were allowed to choose among the citizens. If they neglected to make this choice, or displeased their patron by omitting any mark of attention to which he thought himself entitled, their property was confiscated, and they themselves were considered as out of the protection of the laws. The head of every family of μετοικοι * paid to the state a tax of twelve drachmas for himself, and half that sum for his children; and if unable to make this payment when demanded, was dragged to the market-place and sold as a slave. This would have happened to the philosopher Xenocrates, had not Lycurgus,

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* At Athens the term ξενος was used in a totally different sense from μετοικος, and denoted a stranger who from business or curiosity had come there for a short time. We have no English word which corresponds to μετοικος.

the orator, happened to pass through the forum when he was put up to sale, and paid the amount of his tribute. If any μετοικοι had rendered signal services to the republic, they were sometimes exempted from these taxes and duties; but, except when admitted as citizens, could not be present at the assembly of the people, nor discharge any office in the state. This treatment of the μετοικοι, which, though oppressive, seems to have been less tyrannical than in the other states of Greece, is a proof of the unhappy situation of those whom domestic dissensions, or any other cause, had obliged to leave their country.

The third class of the inhabitants of Attica was composed of slaves, and appears to have generally amounted to 400,000. The greater part of these unfortunate men were brought from Syria, Cappadocia, Thrace, and Scythia. The same infamous traffic which has long subsisted on the coasts of Africa, was common in all these countries. Chiefs of different districts waged war against each other for the purpose of procuring prisoners whom they might sell as slaves; and when unable to obtain a sufficient number, contrived pretexts for seizing some of their own subjects to supply the demand. The ease with which the merchants supplied themselves with slaves, had the usual effect of reducing their price. Slaves are said by Xenophon to have sometimes cost only ten or twelve pounds of our money; and even those who had been taught some art could be purchased for double that sum. Such, however, as displayed uncommon skill or ingenuity, were commonly sold at a much higher price. All the Athenian slaves were not of barbarian extraction. According to the savage practice of the Greeks, prisoners of war, and the inhabitants of cities taken by storm, became the property of the conqueror, and were for ever deprived of their liberty. It is shocking to think that many of those who at Athens acted in the capacity of slaves, had once enjoyed the blessing of independence, had glowed with the noble and generous sentiments which a free constitution of government has a tendency to inspire, and perhaps had displayed in its defence the very qualities which in their countrymen the Athenians were accustomed to view with admiration and respect.

To some modern writers the number of slaves, said to be possessed by the Athenians, has appeared unaccountable; but their surprise would have ceased had they attended to the various services in which this unhappy class of men were engaged. Besides the multitude employed in the marble quarries on Mount Pentelicus; in the different mines wrought throughout Attica; in cultivating the artificial gardens or terraces formed on the declivities of the mountains; and in the ships of war which were generally moved by oars, and were always rowed by slaves; it was by them that most of the manufactures of Athens were performed. Demosthenes employed fifty, and Lysias a hundred and twenty slaves, in the manufacture of arms; and many Athenian citizens carried on this and other branches of trade on a still more extensive scale. The number of domestic slaves seems also to have been great. Some philosophers of moderate fortune, who were men of the most simple manners, had several slaves; and if even they indulged in this luxury, we may conceive to what excess it would be carried by men of a different character, whose wealth enabled them in this instance to gratify their vanity or their ease.

The Spartans and some other nations of Greece were wont to treat their slaves with the most wanton barbarity; and, on the slightest suspicion of a design to regain their liberty, they sometimes murdered numbers in cold blood. The Athenians were less savage in their behaviour to these unfortunate men. They allowed them to retain a small proportion of the fruits of their labour, with which, if industrious and sober, they were sometimes able to purchase their liberty; and permitted such as had been treated with gross inhumanity to take refuge in the temple of Theseus, and insist on being sold to another master. Besides the impossibility of rendering slavery tolerable to any generous mind, it is only when the state of the Athenian slaves is compared with their situation in the other districts of Greece, that they can be said to have been treated with any degree of lenity. They were excluded from being present at certain sacrifices to the gods; their evidence, and theirs was almost the only testimony ever taken in the courts of justice, was always extorted by torture; and their strength might be wasted by excessive labour, or their spirits broken by continued insolence and oppression, without a possibility of obtaining any redress.

The slaves, made free in consequence of some service rendered to the state, or any uncommon zeal displayed in behalf of those to whom they belonged, passed into the class of μετοικοι; but, being still under the patronage of their former masters, they were again reduced to slavery if convicted of having failed in the duties which they owed them.

It is foreign from the subject of this essay to dwell on the inhumanity and injustice of slavery; but, independently of these reasons for reprobating such a practice, it must be allowed to have a most pernicious effect on the character of the inhabitants of those countries in which it prevails. Perpetually accustomed to the view of misery without regarding the sufferers as objects of compassion; corrupted by the insolence and impatience of contradiction, to which absolute power seldom fails to give rise, they gradually become insensible to every feeling of humanity, and capable of sporting with the happiness of others. Of this there cannot be a stronger proof than is found in the history of the Athenians. It does not admit of a doubt that the study of literature and science has a tendency to soften the manners and humanize the heart. Yet, from certain causes, the chief of which was the prevalence of domestic slavery, in many instances this enlightened and ingenious people displayed a ferocity of disposition which would have disgraced the rudest barbarians.

⁂ If the reader be desirous of particular information on the subjects of this essay, he may consult Strabonis Geogr. Pausaniæ Græc, Descr. Meursii de Pop. Att. lib. in Gron.

Thes. tom. iv; Sigonius de Athen. Rep., et Meursii Fort. Att. in Gronov. Thes. Ant. Gr. tom. v; Potter's Archæol. Græc. book i; and Voyage du Jeune Anach. tom. ii, ch. vi; tom. iv, ch. lv; tom. v, ch. lix.

ESSAY XIV.

ON THE MILITARY AND NAVAL AFFAIRS OF THE ATHENIANS.

Athenian army. Period during which every citizen was bound to serve in the field. Στρατηγοι. Power which they possessed. Divisions of the Athenian infantry. Arrangement of it in battle. Form of the Græcian phalanx. Athenians long deficient in cavalry. Pay of the troops of Athens. Means employed by the Athenians to inspire their soldiers with valour. Eminence to which they attained in war. Inhumanity with which they treated the vanquished. Structure of the Athenian ships of war. Arrangement of the ranks of oars by which they were rowed. Modes of attack practised in engagements at sea. Naval force of Athens.

THE republic of Athens had no occasion for a standing army. Every citizen was supposed to be acquainted with the exercises of war; and, whatever were his situation and habits of life, from the age of eighteen to sixty * he was bound to serve in the field as often as his presence was re-

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* It was only on extraordinary occasions that the Athenians were required to serve after the age of forty-five. From eighteen to twenty they were not sent beyond the boundaries of Attica.

quired. Even at Athens, where all were brave, Socrates and Plato had often distinguished themselves by the cool and intrepid valour which in war they uniformly displayed.

When the people had determined to engage in a military expedition, one of the generals appeared in the forum attended by an officer, who kept a register of the Athenians capable of bearing arms, and named those by whom he chose to be accompanied. Every individual whom he mentioned, not excepting those who possessed an ample fortune, or had commanded armies in the field, was required to make instant preparation for his departure, and to serve in any rank which was assigned him. Ten *στρατηγοι* were annually elected by the people, and during a year were the generals of all the forces employed by the state. Originally each of them alternately held the command for a single day; a practice arising from the desire of guarding against the possibility of their forming any design against the liberty of the state; but found to be attended with many disadvantages. The ten often differed among themselves, and counteracted each other's operations; and as their power was equal, the young and inexperienced had the same influence in their deliberations as those who had often distinguished themselves in the service of their country. So serious were these inconveniences, that after the time of Pericles, the Athenians commonly appointed one of the ten as general of the state. In this case his colleagues remained at home, and superintended some religious solemnities, while he alone commanded the forces of the republic, and was accountable for their success. For a considerable time the πολεμαρχος, or third of the archons, commanded the right wing of the army; and, when the opinions of the στρατηγοι happened to be equally divided, he was entitled to a casting vote. For an obvious reason this practice was afterwards discontinued. The πολεμαρχος, being chosen by lot, was often totally unqualified for so important a station; and if obstinate, might endanger the safety of the state.

The Athenian infantry consisted of three divisions. The ψιλοι, armed with bows or slings, were placed in front of the army, and always began the engagement. The πελτασται, carrying light shields and javelins, fought on the two wings; and the οπλιται, or heavy-armed soldiers, composed of the bravest and most experienced of the citizens, were arranged in the centre, and formed the strength of the army. Philip, King of Macedon, has been represented by some writers as the inventor of the phalanx; but from a very early period of the Grecian history the οπλιται had been placed in a similar form, and constituted a body, differing only in number from that employed by the Macedonian kings. The soldiers composing this phalanx were arranged sixteen deep, and were furnished with a pike fourteen cubits, or twenty-one feet long. On a march every soldier occupied a space of six feet; but on advancing towards the enemy the ranks closed, and were not above a foot and a half distant from each other. The five foremost were the only lines whose pikes advanced before the army. In the other ranks the soldiers, by supporting their pikes on the shoulders of those before them, formed a kind of rampart against the weapons discharged by the enemy, occupied the places of those who fell, prevented any in the foremost lines from leaving the field, and pushed them on with a force and impetuosity which troops arranged in a less solid form found it scarcely possible to resist. It was only on level ground, and when opposed in front, that the phalanx was particularly formidable. In a country broken by rivers, or woods, or mountains, it could act to little advantage. When attacked in rear, the soldiers, embarrassed by the closeness of the ranks, and the length of their pikes, found it difficult to face about in sufficient time to defend themselves; and, if thrown into confusion, they could rarely be formed into their original order. The uncommon skill in military evolutions by which the Athenians were distinguished, and the variety of forms which those who composed the phalanx were accustomed to make it assume, generally enabled them to guard against these disadvantages, and to employ the arrangement of the phalanx with the most powerful effect against the enemy.

At the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, the Athenian infantry, exclusive of 1,600 archers, amounted to 29,000 men. Of these, 16,000, thought either too young or too old to serve in the field, were employed in garrisons or in guarding the city; and the remaining 13,000 were reserved for conducting any active operations abroad. The Thessalians were the only people in Greece who, in consequence of the fertility and extent of their plains, had a considerable number of cavalry. The dry, barren, and rocky soil of Attica was so unfavourable to the rearing of horses, that, during the Persian war, the Athenian army was almost entirely composed of infantry. After the expulsion of the Persians out of Greece, the Athenians spared no expense to supply this deficiency in cavalry; and, in the course of the Peloponnesian war had collected a body of 1,200 horse. The cavalry was thought the most honourable service in the Athenian army; no person being admitted into the class of ἱππεῖς, whose character had not previously undergone a very strict investigation, and the pay of those who composed it being often four times that of the infantry.*

The Athenians were long accustomed to serve without pay. They deemed it a part of their duty to fight in defence of their country; and as the military expeditions in which they engaged were of short duration, and were generally undertaken for the sake of booty, they thought themselves amply recompensed by their share of the plunder.

When the republic engaged in those distant wars, the conduct of which was committed to Aristides and Cimon, it appeared reasonable that some provision should be made for the subsistence of the citizens, who, while employed in the service of their country, were prevented from attending to their usual occupations; and from this period pay was always given to the troops of Athens. The pay of a heavy armed soldier was four oboli, or sixpence a-day; an allowance which, taking into account the difference in the value of money, is far greater than is now given by any European nation. An Athenian army, however, was composed of men whose situation was totally different from that of soldiers in modern times. It was not till the decline of the glory of Athens that any of the lower class of citizens were entrusted with the defence of the state. This duty was long performed only by the three higher classes; men who were possessed of property, and almost all of whom had received a liberal education.

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* The Athenians were unacquainted with the use of stirrups. The youth were accustomed to vault on their horses from the ground; but the older soldiers must often have felt the want of this simple invention.

The chief of a cohort received twice, and the general only four times the pay of a private soldier. This practice, so different from what takes place among the modern nations of Europe, is to be attributed partly to the respectable character of those who served in the Athenian army, and partly to that love of equality which was felt by every citizen of Athens. When, after gaining the battle of Marathon, Miltiades asked from the people a crown of olive, an Athenian said to him, "Had you conquered alone, Miltiades, you might have triumphed so too;" and this being the sentiment of all who were present, the request of Miltiades was refused.

The Athenian generals had the disposal of the plunder which they took in war. Sometimes they employed it in decorating Athens with magnificent buildings; sometimes in enriching themselves or their soldiers; and sometimes in adding to the wealth and revenue of the state. It does not appear that they were ever called to account for the use to which they applied it; but, if the amount of it was considerable, they were expected to relieve the republic from most of the expense of the provisions and pay of the army.

Though required by the laws of Solon to apply themselves either to manufactures, commerce, literature, or the fine arts, the Athenians were aware that in their situation it was necessary to attain to eminence in war. Not to mention the many occasions on which it was likely that the dissensions arising from the contiguity and jealousy of the states of Greece would terminate in war, the Spartans considered Athens as the chief obstacle to their attaining that decided superiority over the other Grecian republics, to which they aspired. Such being the sentiments of this powerful and warlike people, it would have been dangerous for the Athenians to neglect the study of war. The love of peace, and the strictest regard to justice, would have been insufficient to protect them against the Spartans. Under the most frivolous pretexts, that ambitious nation would have taken advantage of their weakness, and have rendered them completely subservient to themselves. Amidst the fondness then with which the Athenians cultivated literature and the arts, they regarded eminence in war as the only means by which they could secure the possession of the liberty, wealth, and power to which they had attained.

Besides the attention with which the youth were trained to the Gymnastic exercises, and the ardour with which every individual was accustomed to practise them through life, some institutions peculiar to the Athenians could not fail to have a powerful influence on their military character. At the age of eighteen, every young Athenian was brought into one of the temples at Athens, and there, in the presence of many of his fellow citizens, solemnly swore that he would never dishonour the arms with which he was then invested, that he would never abandon the post which might be assigned him, but to his last breath would fight in defence of the safety and honour of his country. The violation of this oath, being regarded as the highest degree of baseness and impiety, was punished with indelible infamy, and an exclusion from every office in the state. This punishment no one who deserved it could escape. So distinguished in general was the valour of the Athenians, that the attention of many was immediately called to the few individuals, whose cowardice was so unlike the usual character of their countrymen. On those, who by their gallantry in battle had obtained the applause of their fellow soldiers, were conferred many honours and rewards. Crowns were decreed them in the public assembly, and a road was opened to all the distinctions and offices which the people had a right to bestow. Even they who fell, were not deprived of their reward; their valour was celebrated in funeral orations delivered by the greatest orators in the state; their memory was revered by their countrymen; their families became the care of the people; and their sons, after being educated at the public expense, were invested with arms in the assembly of the people, and were there exhorted to imitate the virtue and the valour of their fathers. 'Hæc possunt et addere mentem timido;' and, on the Athenians, who were wont to consider honour as more valuable than life, they must have produced a most powerful effect.

Independently of those honours which the Athenians might obtain by intrepidity in the field, every citizen derived advantage from the success of his country in war. Besides sharing in the spoils taken in battle, the lands which he conquered were to enlarge the power of a state in the government of which he participated with his fellow citizens, and their revenue was to free him from the burthen of taxes; was to decorate the city, the magnificence of which flattered his vanity; or was to increase the splendour of the theatrical exhibitions, which in peace formed one of his favourite amusements.

Never, accordingly, was any nation more distinguished by military genius than the Athenians. In the battles of Marathon and Salamis, nothing but consummate skill in war could have enabled them to vanquish the immense armaments of the Persians; and though at Platææ they acted only in a subordinate capacity, yet the magnanimity of the 8,000 Athenians who were present was not surpassed by any of the confederates, and contributed much to the glory acquired by the defeat of Mardonius. After the expulsion of the Persians from Greece, the military talents of the Athenians were still more illustriously displayed. For several years they almost alone carried on an offensive and successful war against that powerful people, and at length compelled them to accept most humiliating terms of peace. In less than fifty years, they established an empire of more than a thousand miles of territory on the coast of Asia; reduced under subjection many of the islands scattered through the Ægean Sea, and even made the barbarians of Thrace and the Chersonesus submit to their power. When the extent of their dominion had excited the jealousy of Lacedæmon, and most of the other states of Greece, for twenty-seven years they resisted the united force of all these nations; and though at last they sunk under the effects of their defeat in Sicily, and the superior genius of Lysander, yet by their valour and conduct they rose from this state of depression, and regained no inconsiderable portion of the power and dominions which they had before enjoyed. Even during the first Punick war, Rome could probably have sent into the field more than 100,000 of her inhabitants; whereas in the days of the greatest glory of Athens, her citizens (and it was by them that almost all her conquests were made) never exceeded 21,000 men.*

Though brave, the Athenians did not carry on war with humanity. The prisoners taken by them in the field were always reduced to slavery; and if a city had been defended by an enemy with uncommon valour, the men capable of bearing arms were frequently put to death, while the women and children became the property of the conquerors. This system of warfare, common to the Athenians, with all the other states of Greece, introduced into battles a ferocity to which in modern times men are generally strangers. The Greeks did not contend merely for glory or for power; they fought for liberty, and for every thing which they held dear, and chose rather to die with honour in the field, than expose themselves to the more dreadful fate, which, if vanquished, they expected to await them. This ferocious spirit, so unlike what ought to have characterized the most polished people of antiquity, is in a great measure to be ascribed to the warmth with which, as citizens of a democracy, the Athenians entered into all the contests in which the state was engaged. Jealous of the power of the nations against which they fought, and alive to the feeling of injuries, which from sharing in the government they considered as personal to themselves, they were steeled against compassion, and dissatisfied with every gratification of resentment unaccompanied with the slavery or the death of their enemies.

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* Sometimes the Athenians employed as soldiers a certain number of μετοικοι and slaves; but, for obvious reasons, in the field they could have little confidence in either of these classes of men.

The Grecian ships of war were of a different shape from those intended for commerce. Merchantmen were of an oval form, and in order to contain a greater quantity of commodities, were very broad in the middle. Ships of war, on the contrary, were long and narrow, and much more adapted for moving with celerity. Though furnished with sails, they were generally rowed, whereas in merchantmen the Greeks more frequently made use of sails than of oars. Originally, the Grecian ships of war had only one bank or tier of oars, and were sometimes so long as to have fifty oars on each side. It has been said that the Corinthians invented vessels with different banks of oars, and that this mode of construction became common in Greece, and was afterwards adopted by the Romans. Several learned men, however, having denied that such vessels were ever constructed by the ancients, and some naval officers having thought that in the upper banks the oars must have been useless and unmanageable, it may be proper to mention the grounds of the common opinion, and to attempt a solution of the difficulties with which it seems to be attended.

In speaking of the ship of Brutus, the Latin poet Lucan has said,

> Summis longè petit æquora remis,

words which plainly imply that on board the vessel other oars were nearer the sea. Those who row above, says the old Scholiast on Aristophanes, are called θρανιται; those below θαλαμιται; and those in the intermediate space ζυγιται. The authors who have supposed that these divisions of the rowers may refer to their position on the deck of the vessel, are unquestionably mistaken. Silius Italicus has mentioned that the deck of a ship being set on fire during a naval engagement, the thranites were leaving the vessel before the thalamites were aware of their danger; and Appian relates that a vessel having been pierced by the rostrum of another, the thalamites were drowned, though the other rowers had time to escape by swimming; events neither of which could have happened, if the different classes of rowers had been stationed on the same line. Besides, in some ancient pieces of sculpture, and particularly on what is called the pillar of Trajan, erected at Rome to commemorate the victories of that prince, there are figures of Grecian or Roman ships of war, in several of which some oars are manifestly placed in a higher tier than others.

It is a mistake to imagine that in such vessels the rowers in one bank would obstruct the operations of those in the tier beneath them; no one oar being placed immediately above or below another, but all of them being arranged in the quincunx or chequer order, and consequently having full room to play without any danger of obstruction.

The most plausible objection to the use of these vessels has been drawn from the enormous length of the upper oars, it having been computed that in some ships of this construction they could not be less than sixty feet. This difficulty has been removed by the ingenuity of the late General Melville. According to his supposition, the sides of the vessels did not rise perpendicularly above the surface of the water, but were inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees, in consequence of which it is obvious that even in the longest galleys the upper oars would be of a very moderate length. This idea of General Melville is more probable and satisfactory from its being certain that only one rower was employed at an oar. In the figures of the galleys on Trajan's pillar, a single individual is always represented as holding an oar; and Thucydides mentions that the thranites received higher pay than the thalamites, because they rowed with a longer oar; a reason in which there would have been no force, had not every man rowed alone. The seats for the rowers are thought to have been about two feet long, and were placed at such a distance from each other, as enabled every individual to move his oar without obstructing those around him.

From using vessels with two, the Greeks came to construct them with five, ten, and even forty banks of oars: but the largest of these seem to have been intended more for ostentation than use, and were found too huge and unwieldy to be employed in war. Except a ship with sixteen banks, built by Demetrius Poliorcetes, a successor of Alexander the Great, who was uncommonly skilful in mechanics, we do not read of any galley with more than six banks of oars which had been used to advantage in battle. The Athenians employed only triremes, or vessels with three banks of oars, and so uniform was their practice in this respect, that at Athens the word τριηρης denoted a ship of war. On the prow of the Greek galleys, and a little below the surface of the water, was a strong beam of wood pointed with brass or iron called in Greek εμβολος, and in Latin *rostrum*, with which in a naval engagement those on board endeavoured to pierce and sink the vessels of their opponents. When disappointed in this object, they annoyed the enemy with javelins, stones, and arrows, or attempted to set fire to their ships by throwing into them a variety of combustible materials. By means of grappling irons also, they often joined their own galleys to those opposing them, and in this situation fought with the same desperate valour which they were wont to display in the field. On board a trireme were about a hundred and eighty rowers, whose seats were generally under the deck, and seventy combatants who fought wherever they could give the greatest annoyance to the enemy. A quinquereme had on board three hundred rowers, and a hundred and twenty combatants; and the larger ships of war were probably manned in the same proportion.

In some sculptures of ancient ships of war, are small towers erected either on the middle of the deck, or near the prow. By means of these, the combatants were under cover from the attack of the enemy, while the fire and weapons thrown out of them did greater execution than if discharged from the same level with the deck of the vessels against which they fought. As such towers would have retarded the motion of a ship in sailing, the Greeks were not accustomed to erect them except before an engagement; but the materials were always on board, and the different parts being made to fit each other exactly, could easily be put together in a very short space of time.

By the advice of Themistocles, who, after the battle of Marathon, had the discernment to foresee that at no distant period the Persians would attempt a more formidable invasion of Greece, the Athenians spared no expense in increasing the number and improving the construction of their galleys. At the battle of Salamis they had a hundred and eighty triremes, and about the commencement of the Peloponnesian war they could have brought into action no fewer than three hundred, and were thought to have then possessed a greater naval force than all the other states of Greece.

⁂ The authors who may be consulted on the subjects of this essay are Polybius with the French notes of Folard; Potter's Archæol. Gr. book iii; Guischardt, Mem. sur les Grecs et Romains; Montfaucon l'Antiquité Expliquée; Bayfius de Re Navali in Gronov. Thes. Ant. Gr. tom. xi; J. Schefferus de Militia Navali in Poleni Supplem. in Thes. Antiq. tom. v; Pownall's Antiq.

ESSAY XV.

ON THE CITY OF ATHENS; AND THE MONEY, REVENUE, AND PRIVATE LIFE OF THE ATHENIANS.

Situation of the city of Athens. Its extent greater than was necessary for the accommodation of its inhabitants. It contained many elegant and splendid buildings: but was not a beautiful city. Piræus. Extent of the walls of Athens. Public gardens in its neighbourhood. Manner in which money was computed at Athens. Real value of the Attic talent. Athenian coins. Amount of the finances of Athens. Sources whence they were derived. Private life of the Athenians. Manner in which they spent the different parts of the day. Mode in which they amused themselves at their entertainments. Nature of the Grecian wines. Situation of women at Athens. Bad effects which it produced on their own character, and on that of the men. Education of the Athenian youth began at a very early period of life. Its object was both to strengthen the body and improve the mind. Branches of literature which they were expected to study. Attention to music.

ATHENS was situate in the only extensive plain to be found in the mountainous district of Attica. In the middle of this plain was a rock, the declivity of which many of the inhabitants at an early period chose as their residence, because there they could more easily defend themselves against sudden incursions of the barbarous tribes which then often ravaged Greece; and because being ignorant of the art of draining the water, frequently descending in torrents from the mountains, it was only in such a situation that they could guard against the deluges then common in many of the lower parts of Europe. When the population of Athens increased, the rock was converted into a citadel; and before the age of Pericles, the houses, which had gradually spread along the plain, formed a circuit of more than five miles. As Athens contained only forty or fifty thousand inhabitants, this extent was more than sufficient for their accommodation; but many of the houses were surrounded with gardens and plantations; and such as had been razed in consequence of being occupied by persons convicted of treason, were never rebuilt.

During the Persian war, Athens was so imperfectly fortified, that without venturing to stand a siege, the people abandoned Attica, and sought refuge in their ships. To prevent their being again reduced to such an extremity, Themistocles, disregarding the remonstrances of the Spartans, persuaded the people to surround the city with walls, deemed in that age to be impregnable.

Pisistratus and Hipparchus were the first who wished to introduce a style of elegance and magnificence into the public buildings at Athens; but their plans were too extensive to be finished by themselves; and the continued wars in which the Athenians were involved, joined to a dislike of every measure suggested by any person connected with Hippias, prevented them from being afterwards completed. No sooner, however, had Pericles, by eloquence and address, obtained a complete ascendency over the minds of his countrymen than he conceived a similar design: possessed himself of a taste for elegance and splendour, and convinced that, while gratifying it, he would, at the same time, secure the favour of the Athenians, by flattering their vanity and affording constant employment to the poorer class of citizens, he had recourse to one of the boldest and most unprincipled measures which any statesman ever devised. The contributions annually paid by many Grecian states for repelling any future invasion of the Persians had been transferred from the island of Delos to the citadel of Athens; and having been continued for a number of years, had accumulated to an immense sum. No immediate exigency requiring this for the public service, Pericles persuaded his countrymen to expend on the decoration of Athens, and the improvement of the arts, a portion of this sum equal in value to 4,000,000*l.*

sterling. In forming the plan of the magnificent edifices, which he was thus enabled to construct, Pericles was directed by the celebrated Phidias, the greatest genius in the arts to whom any country has ever given birth. During fifteen years this wonderful man acted as superintendent of the public works at Athens; and, in that time, built of the finest Pentelican marble the *Παρθενον*, or temple of Minerva; the *Προπυλαια*, or entrance into the citidel; the *Ωδαιον*, or theatre of music; and many splendid porticoes in different parts of the city. Since the age of Pericles, Athens has often been ravaged by tribes of barbarians; yet at the distance of more than 2,000 years the ruins of these edifices are still viewed with admiration and astonishment, and must be acknowledged to display a magnificence and a skill in architecture, which, if equalled, have never been surpassed. The arts of sculpture and painting were employed with no less success for the decoration of Athens. Above 3,000 statues of heroes, patriots, and gods, finished by the most celebrated artists, were scattered through the citadel and forum, and places of public resort, while in every portico and temple were to be found paintings of Xeuxis, Parrhasius, or Polygnotus.*

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* The paintings of the Athenians were on perishable materials, and none of the best of them have descended to our

Notwithstanding the various productions of genius thus exhibited in Athens, the city itself was far from being beautiful. In general, the houses were mean and inelegant, the streets were narrow and irregular, and it was not till a stranger reached the citadel that he could perceive any traces of the elegance and splendour which he had expected to admire.

Athens was about five miles distant from the sea. When Themistocles formed the design of rendering his country the first maritime state in Greece, he pursuaded the people to make such improvements in the harbour of Piræus as rendered it capable of containing the whole navy of Athens.

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times; but the rapture with which some of them are mentioned by the Greek and Roman authors; the enormous prices at which they were sold, and the eagerness with which states contended with each other for the possession of them, show, that in painting the Athenians had attained to no less eminence than in architecture. From a very curious passage in the Απομνημονευματα of Xenophon, it appears that in addition to the other perfections of his art to which Parrhasius had before attained, he learned from Socrates the manner of exhibiting the virtues and feelings of the heart. With their skill in statuary, we have more certain means of being acquainted. In different figures of Venus, in the Niobe, the Mercury, and above all, in the Apollo Belvidere, there is a beauty, grace, and dignity, which those who have not seen these inestimable productions will be unable to conceive.

To protect the ships and the inhabitants of Piræus from any attack by land, he built a wall sixty feet high, extending from Athens to the southern extremity of the harbour; and a wall equally broad and forty feet high was afterwards erected by Pericles on the north. These walls joined the city of Athens to the town of Piræus, and the whole fortifications were nearly twenty miles in circuit.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Athens, were several public gardens, adorned with porticoes and groves, to which every citizen had access. It was in these gardens that the philosophers, who disliked the noise and confusion of the city, were wont to fix their residence and deliver their prelections. The followers of Plato taught in the Academy, the disciples of Aristotle in the Lycæum, and the Epicureans in a garden left them by Epicurus. These different sects seem to have felt no jealousy of each other's popularity or eminence, and never allowed a diversity of speculative opinions to disturb the harmony in which they were accustomed to live. The Athenians, who were aware that a number of strangers resorted to Attica with the view of attending the discourses of those philosophers, encouraged them to reside there, by assuming no jurisdiction over the chiefs of the different sects, and except in the case of Socrates, and on a few other occasions, when they were actuated by incidental causes, appear to have left them at perfect liberty to teach any doctrines which they chose to profess.

At Athens, money was computed by talents, minæ, drachmas, and oboli. The talent contained sixty minæ: the mina, or pound, a hundred drachmas; and the drachma six oboli. Till of late, the talent of silver was thought equal to 193*l.* sterling; but from many accurate experiments made thirty years ago on a number of Athenian coins, preserved in collections of medals at London and Paris, it was found to have been equivalent to 225*l.* of our money. Consequently, the mina was equal to 3*l.* 15*s.*; the drachma to 9*d.*; and the obolus to 1½*d.* The talent* then contained the same quantity of silver, which if coined would now amount to 225*l.* sterling; but, in fact, was of much greater value.† The real value of money is perpetually changing. In every country it depends on the quantity of the precious metals in circulation, and is measured by the proportion of the necessaries and conveniences of life which can be purchased by a given amount. Considered in this view, the value of the Athenian money has been stated, by a late historian, as ten times greater than ours. This point cannot be accurately determined without a more extensive knowledge of the prices of commodities at Athens than can now be obtained; but it appears to me that by calculating the Athenian money as six, or, at most as seven times more valuable than ours, we shall approach more nearly to the truth. For a long time gold was scarce in Greece, and seems to have rarely been used, except in decorating the temples and statues of the gods. After Philip of Macedon began to work the gold mines at Pangæus, it became much more plentiful, and its relative value to that of silver, which had been thirteen, fell so uncommonly low as ten to one.

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* When the Greek writers use the general term ταλαντον, they always mean a talent of silver. The ταλαντον χρυσȣ varied in its amount according to the relative value of gold to that of silver.

† Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis, tom. vii, table xi.

The only gold coin ever struck in Attica was the χρυσεος; but some foreign coins, particularly the daric, equal in value to the χρυσεος, and the cyzicenus, valued at twenty-eight drachmas, seem to have been current at Athens in consequence of the trade carried on with the countries where they were coined. A variety of silver coins, the largest of which were drachmas, didrachmas, or pieces of two drachmas, and tetradrachmas, or pieces of four drachmas, were common in Attica. The extreme smallness of some of them, the value of which did not exceed half an obolus, rendered the use of them very inconvenient; but the Athenians had an absurd prejudice against the employment of copper in coin, and even when they consented to the introduction of it, they would not use it in pieces of greater value than the fourth of an obolus. All the Athenian coins were marked on one side with a head of Minerva, the tutelary divinity of Athens, and on the other with the figure of an owl, the bird sacred to that goddess; and till the age of Pericles were remarkable for the coarseness of the workmanship.

During the Peloponnesian war, the revenue of Athens amounted to 2000 talents, or 450,000*l.* sterling; a sum which, making allowance for the difference in the value of money, is far beyond what was ever enjoyed by a people possessed of so small a teritory as Attica. The first branch of this revenue arose from the annual rent of certain lands and forests belonging to the state; from the twenty-fourth part of the produce of the silver mines of Laurium; from the tax levied on the μετοικοι residing in Attica; from the amount of duties imposed on the articles sold in the market-place of Athens; and from a fiftieth of the value paid on all commodities either exported or imported at the harbour of Piræus. These different duties, the directors of the finances annually let by auction. The person to whom they were farmed was bound to pay the sum at which he had taken them in the eighth month of the year; and if he did not perform this engagement, was dragged to prison and remained in confinement till he had found security for double the sum originally due.

The second branch of the revenue of Athens, arose from the contributions of her allies. For several years after the expulsion of Xerxes out of Greece, the inhabitants of Ionia and of the islands in the Ægean sea voluntarily assessed themselves in a certain sum to provide for their defence against any future invasion of the Persians. After the Athenians, taking advantage of the superiority of their naval force, had reduced these states under subjection, they converted the annual contributions into a part of the revenue of Athens, and increased them as the exigencies of the republic required. At first the sum levied in this manner was only 460 talents. Before the commencement of the Peloponnesian war it had been raised to 600; and in the course of that war amounted to upwards of 1,300 talents.

As after the death of Pericles, neither these branches of revenue, nor the fines and confiscations occasionally paid into the treasury, were sufficient to defray the expenses of the government; the citizens of the three higher classes were annually taxed to a certain amount. By a regulation of Solon, those who had an annual revenue of 500 medimni of corn or oil, paid a talent for the service of the state; and they who possessed an income of 300 or 200 medimni, were assessed in a similar proportion. The unfairness of this mode of taxation is apparent. The citizens whose property yielded them 1,000 or 1,500 medimni, paid no more than those who had only 500; and they whose income was in any degree less than 200, contributed nothing to the support of the state. In consequence of these imperfections in the system of Solon, magistrates were appointed who every fifth year made an accurate estimate of the property of all the citizens of Athens, and exacted from every individual the fiftieth or twentieth or twelfth part of his income, as the circumstances of the state required. According to this plan, the citizens entirely destitute of property continued to be exempted from taxation, and the wealthy paid exactly in proportion to the amount of their fortune.

When any one supposed that another citizen assessed in a smaller sum than himself was possessed of a greater fortune, he was allowed to petition the magistrates for redress. If that citizen acknowledged the justice of the allegation, he was ordered to pay the sum demanded by the accuser; and if he denied it, he might be obliged to take this man's fortune in exchange for his own.

Besides the ordinary contributions, during a war, the richer citizens were expected to furnish a certain number of triremes for the defence of the state, and were so desirous of obtaining the favour of the people, that without being assessed they generally contributed for this purpose to the full extent of their ability. About the age of Demosthenes, 120 were annually chosen out of each of the ten tribes, and the twelve hundred thus appointed were required to pay all the extraordinary contributions demanded by the state. To facilitate the collection of these sums, the three hundred known to be the most opulent were expected to pay the whole amount to government, and afterwards had recourse to the other nine hundred for the proportion due from them. The ten classes, which formed the twelve hundred, had the name of *συμμοριαι*.

There was little variety in the private life of the Athenians. All of them rose at day-break, and spent a short time in the exercises of devotion. Soon after six in the morning, the judges took their seats on the tribunal, and those employed in agriculture, manufactures, or commerce, engaged in their different occupations. At midday, the more wealthy citizens, who by that time had commonly finished their serious business, refreshed themselves with a short sleep, and afterwards spent a few hours in hunting, or in the exercises of the palæstra, or in walking through the delightful groves on the banks of the Ilissus and Cephisus; or still more frequently in discussing with each other, in the forum, the interests of the state, the conduct of the magistrates, and the news of the day. It was also during the afternoon that the Athenians sometimes played at κυβεια and πεττεια; two games, the first of which resembled hazard, and the other either backgammon or chess.* In general, however, they do not seem to have been fond of play, and those who devoted to it much time or attention were regarded with some degree of contempt.

During the day, the Athenians either took no food or only a slight repast in private. At sun-set they sat down to supper, and considering the business of the day as over, devoted the evening to society and amusement, and often continued together till a late hour of the night. In Attica, the lower class of the people lived almost entirely on vegetables, and even the richer citizens were long remarkable for the plainness of their entertainments. A short time before the age of Demosthenes, they began to import various articles of luxury from the different countries with which they traded, and introduced into their entertainments a profusion and magnificence long unknown in any part of Greece.

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* Meursius de Lud. Græc.; Bulenger. de Lud. Vet. in Gron. Thes. tom. vii.

In Athens the master of the house did not preside at supper. When the company had assembled, one of them, chosen by lot, was appointed king of the feast, and was empowered to preserve order among the guests, to fix the quantity of wine which they were to drink, and to determine the manner in which, while together, they were to pass the time. In the convivial meetings of the Athenians, music, of which all the Greeks were passionately fond, formed a favourite part of their amusement. Sometimes every one sang in succession, and occasionally the whole joined in singing some favourite air. The songs, sung on such occasions, seem to have often been odes composed in honour of those who had rescued their country from slavery, or had fallen with glory in her defence, and still more frequently the gay and sportive productions of Anacreon.

Soon after supper the master of the feast was accustomed to propose a subject on which all present were expected to deliver their sentiments. Plato and Xenophon have each of them written a συμποσιον, or account of a convivial entertainment, and have introduced this practice as a chief part of the amusement of the company. In Plato the subject is love, and in Xenophon what ought to be the object of desire. Among a people possessed of so much acuteness, fancy, and command of expression as the Athenians, the harangues delivered on such occasions would often be instructive, sprightly, or ingenious; but the practice itself does not deserve the praises which some extravagant admirers of the Greeks have bestowed on it. Conversation is then most pleasing when it flows from the incidents of the moment; when those engaged in it feel themselves without restraint, and express the sentiments which their temper, situation, or habit of thinking, has a tendency to suggest.

As the evening grew late, the convivial amusements of the Athenians became less refined. Sometimes jugglers and buffoons were hired to excite the surprise and laughter of the guests; and, towards the end of the entertainment, female musicians were occasionally introduced, at whose appearance the whole company rose from table and joined in dancing till it was time to retire.

It was a saying in Greece that a convivial meeting should not consist of a smaller number than the Graces, nor a greater than the Muses; and accordingly no Greek writer has mentioned any private entertainment at which the landlord expected more than nine.

Before sitting down to supper the Athenians generally used the warm bath, after which they sometimes anointed themselves with oil, in order to prevent the excessive perspiration which the heat of the bath would otherwise have occasioned.

In Greece there were two kinds of wine. The first soon attained to perfection, but could not be kept for more than a year; whereas the other, though long harsh and unpalatable, was so mellowed by age as to become far superior in quality. To bring this last kind to maturity, the Greeks were wont to expose the casks containing it to a considerable degree of heat, and did not think the Coan wine fit for use, till, during four successive years, it had been exposed for thirty or forty days to the most violent heat of the sun. In the opinion of many, however, the wine was injured by this excessive heat, and was in a more perfect state when, by a long exposure to a moderate and equable warmth, it had gradually attained to maturity.

The inferior kind of Grecian wine seems to have cost from one to two pounds sterling a hogshead. The same quantity of the better sort was sometimes sold for seven or eight pounds; and the elder Pliny mentions that as much had been given for an amphora, or nine gallons, of the best Greek wine when brought to its most perfect state by having been kept for a number of years. Besides allowing wine to improve by age, the Greeks frequently heightened its flavour by infusing into the casks a variety of fruits, flowers, and aromatics; and, to render it lighter of digestion, sometimes mixed with it a small quantity of sea water. With the exception of the wine of Rhodes, which contained a greater proportion of this last mixture than was agreeable to the taste, the wines brought from the islands scattered through the Ægean sea were thought superior to any produced on the continent of Greece; and those of Lesbos, Naxos, and Thasos, were generally allowed to be the best.

Solon had enjoined the Athenians never to drink wine without a mixture of water, an injunction which they rarely disobeyed. In the heroic ages this practice had been universal, because the early Greek wines seem to have been fiery and noxious, till diluted with a considerable proportion of water; and even at a later period, when the art of making them was better understood, the same custom continued to prevail. Besides the unwillingness of the Greeks to depart from the manners of their ancestors, many of the Grecian wines were too strong and glutinous to be drunk without water; and it was a common opinion in Greece, that there was some degree of impiety in employing unmixed wine for any other purpose, than in making libations to the gods. To render the mixture more palatable, the Greeks generally mixed boiling water with their wines; but, except when sick, seldom drank it while warm. In order to cool it, they were long accustomed to infuse a small quantity of snow or ice; but afterwards used to place the bowl containing the mixture in another vessel filled with snow. The proportion of water to wine was generally as five to two, or three to one; but varied with the taste of the company and the quality of the wine. The Maronean wine, made on the borders of Thrace, was so strong that Pliny mentions it as customary with those who drank it, to add six or eight parts of water to one of wine. During supper, the Greeks commonly drank their lighter wines. On its being removed, a large bowl of stronger wine mingled with water, in the proportion fixed by the master of the feast, was placed upon the table, and each of the company was expected either to retire or to drink the quantity which he chose to appoint.

It has been observed, that the estimation, in which women are held in society, keeps pace with the refinement to which a people has attained.—Though in general the observation be just, it does not apply to the Athenians. In the ages of Pericles and Demosthenes, they had made considerable advancement in the fine arts, and in several of the branches of science; their fondness for dramatic exhibitions was unbounded; and their taste in judging of literary compositions seems to have been delicate and correct: yet even then the women were treated with unkindness and severity. They lived in a remote quarter of the house, and were never allowed to mingle in society with the men. They were not permitted to go abroad without being attended by a slave, who acted as a spy upon their conduct. They were given in marriage without their consent; and were expected to make the care of their families the sole object of attention. In a funeral oration composed by Plato in the person of Pericles,* he makes that illustrious statesman exhort the Athenian woman to mind their domestic concerns, and assure them that they would be most faithful in the discharge of their duty, when they never attracted the notice of their fellow-citizens. The coarseness of manners frequently displayed, even by the highest class of the citizens of Athens, was not the only pernicious effect of this unjust exclusion of the women from society; treated with indifference and neglect by the men, they too often became regardless of character, and sometimes degraded themselves by atrocious crimes, or sunk into total profligacy and vice.

The Athenian women were thought to be less handsome than the men; but were far from being deficient in beauty, and possessed the talent of displaying it to the utmost advantage. Their dress was simple and elegant; and even in modern times the arts of heightening the complexion, and improving the gracefulness of form, have never been more studied than at Athens.

The Athenians regarded the youth as the future supports of the state, and their skill in the different branches of education as the best security for the maintenance of its safety and independence.

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* Plat. Opera, in Menezeno.

At an early age they were taught to swim and support themselves for a considerable time in the water. In a state like Athens, where every citizen might often be required to serve on shipboard, this was a most important attainment. From the nature of the naval engagements of the Greeks, a galley frequently sunk a few minutes after being struck, and those on board could save their lives in no other way than by swimming to the ships around them. In all the sea fights of the Athenians, many of them were preserved by the perfection in this art to which they had attained.

At the age of seven, the youths were put under the care of παιδαγωγοι, or directors of the Gymnasia, and by them were early inured to bear hunger and thirst, and heat and cold. By the gymnastic exercises, which though moderate at first were gradually rendered more severe, they learned to run with inconceivable velocity; to throw the javelin with unerring skill; to manage the most spirited and restive horses; and, to wrestle and box, not only on level ground, but when standing to a considerable depth in sand. These exercises did not merely employ them in youth: being considered as the last preparation for war, they were occasionally practised by all the Athenians of riper years, and formed the chief occupation of those who meant to contend in the games. Besides spending a portion of the day in the exercises of the Gymnasium, the young Athenians were also required to attend grammarians appointed by the state. By these men they were not taught any foreign tongue, because the Greeks regarded every other nation with some degree of contempt, and because no books appear to have been published in the languages of the states with which they traded; but under their direction, they learned to read and write the Greek language with facility, correctness, and elegance, and were habituated to give every syllable the particular tone and cadence which it required. At Athens this minute attention to the sound, as well as the mode of expression, was indispensably necessary. By attending the theatre, and listening to the orations delivered before the courts of justice and in the assembly of the people, the Athenians, even of the lower class, had acquired the faculty of expressing themselves with neatness and accuracy; they knew the inflexion of voice suited to every word and sentence; and never failed to testify a disapprobation of those who ventured to speak in public without a critical knowledge of the sound and meaning of the words which they employed.

For a long time the first book put into the hands of the Athenian youth was the Poems of Homer. It having been represented by philosophers, that the ludicrous colours, in which that poet often exhibits the gods, might inspire the young with a contempt for religion, the perusal of his writings was deferred till they could understand the nature of poetic fiction; and the Fables of Æsop, and moral sentences of Theognis and Solon were substituted in their stead.

Besides the principles of arithmetic, with which, at an early period of life, all the Athenians were made acquainted; those of higher rank, when approaching towards manhood, were accustomed to study eloquence as the most effectual means of guiding the resolutions of their countrymen, and obtaining the direction of the affairs of the state: geometry and tactics, to qualify them for commanding the armies of the public: physics, to guard them against the superstition to which an ignorance of the laws of nature necessarily gives rise: and ethics, to fit them for discharging the duties incumbent upon them as men and as citizens. These various branches of knowledge were not taught in establishments formed by the state. When the study of letters became common in Greece, many began to apply to them as the means of gain, and having made themselves masters of some department of literature, taught the principles of it to those who chose to purchase their instructions. From all the districts of Greece, men of this description flocked to Athens as the best field for the exercise of their talents, and were amply remunerated by what they received from the number of wealthy Athenians, who grudged no expense in the acquisition of such branches of literature, as they were eager to acquire.

In consequence of the encouragement thus held out to the instructors of youth, there arose in Greece a class of men known by the name of sophists, persons of showy talents, who at the public games and places of public resort were accustomed to deliver pompous harangues on subjects most fitted to attract the attention of the multitude; and who pretended to be capable of speaking, without preparation, on any branch of literature or science. To youth, no society could be more dangerous than that of the sophists. Actuated solely by the desire of distinction or of gain, these men were themselves totally destitute of integrity; and, by often displaying their ingenuity in justifying actions of the most immoral tendency, gradually lessened the reverence which every uncorrupted mind must feel for virtue. Socrates rendered a most important service to his country in exposing to ridicule the ignorance and presumption of the sophists, and caused them to be regarded with such contempt by all the youth who frequented his society, that afterwards they do not seem to have been held in any estimation at Athens.

Besides the more important studies which engaged the attention of the Athenian youth, music was deemed so indispensable a branch of education, that skill in this elegant accomplishment was thought to add to the eminence of Epaminondas, and the want of it to detract from that of Themistocles. At Athens, the flute was long the favourite instrument: but, Alcibiades having ceased to learn it on account of its distorting the countenance, the use of it was confined to musicians by profession, and the youth were taught to sing and accompany their voice with the lyre.

⁂ On the subjects of this essay, much information may be obtained by consulting Meursii Athen. Att. Cecrop. et Ceramic. Gemin. in Gronov. Thes. Gr. Ant. tom. iv; Meurs. de Piræo, lib. ibid. tom. v; Gauric. de Sculpt. Demontios. de Sculpt. &c.; Manut. de Cælat. et Pict. Philostr. de Pict. Buling. de Pict. ibid. tom. ix; Cornar. de Conviv. Bacc. de Conv. Casal. de Tricl. &c. Laurent. de Conv. Laurent. de Prand. &c. Vet. ibid. tom. ix; Platonis Συμποσιον; Xenoph. Συμπ.; Potter's Antiq. book i and iv; Barry on the Wines of the Anc.; and Voyage du Jeune Anach. tom. ii.

ESSAY XVI.

ON THE COMEDY OF THE ATHENIANS.

Origin of comedy in Greece. Poets by whom it was reduced into a regular form. Character of the old comedy. Freedom with which Aristophanes censures the measures of the Athenian government, and attacks the conduct of individuals. The tragic poets often the objects of his ridicule. Ludicrous colours in which he sometimes exhibits the gods. Character of the middle and new comedy. Excellence of the compositions of Menander.

IN Greece, dramatic productions seem to have originated from a very simple institution. Icarius, an inhabitant of Attica, who had learned from Bacchus the art of cultivating the vine, one day observed a goat destroying his grapes. Having seized the animal, he sacrificed it to Bacchus, and the neighbouring peasants danced around the victim, and joined in celebrating the praises of the god. The ceremony was so much suited to the taste of the rude age in which Icarius lived, that it was frequently repeated by those who had witnessed it, and soon became a favourite amusement throughout Attica. The poets appointed to compose the verses sung in honour of the god, finding little room for the display of their genius, while confined to a topic uninteresting in itself, and exhausted by those before them, presumed to vary the subject of their odes; and, during the intervals of the songs of the chorus, while Thespis attempted to excite the admiration or pity of the spectators by the recital of an interesting or mournful event, Susarion * endeavoured to amuse them by the relation of some ludicrous incident, or by ridiculing some character with which they were acquainted. For a long time, comedy remained in this imperfect state in which it had been left by Susarion, and was exhibited only through the villages of Attica; but a Sicilian poet named Epicharmus, having at length reduced it into a form similar to that into which tragedy had been brought by Æschylus, Pericles caused it to be represented on the stage at Athens. The delight with which the people beheld the exhibition of comedy encouraged dramatic authors to apply to it; and, before the conclusion of the Peloponnesian war, no fewer than twelve poets had distinguished themselves in this species of composition. Of three hundred and sixty-five comedies said to have

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* Thespis and Susarion flourished soon after Solon.

been written by them, only eleven are now extant; but fortunately they enable us to form a perfect idea of the character of the old comedy, and are the productions of Aristophanes, the author supposed to have carried it to the greatest perfection.

Besides the low buffoonery and gross indecency, for which the comedies of Aristophanes have justly been censured, the incidents are often improbable; the persons allegorical, and the different parts of the pieces not sufficiently connected with each other; but notwithstanding these defects, and their manifest imperfection as dramatic productions, some particulars respecting them are so curious in themselves, and cast so much light on the manners of the Athenians, as to be deserving of particular attention.

The first remarkable circumstance in the comedies of Aristophanes is the freedom with which he censures the conduct of the Athenian government. The tragic poets took every opportunity of courting the favour of the people, and often allude to the perfection of the laws of Athens, the divine original of many of her institutions, and her superiority over the other states of Greece. In the writings of Aristophanes there are no such allusions. He never stoops to flatter the vanity or court the favour of his countrymen, and not unfrequently exposes to ridicule or reprobation measures which had been adopted by the unanimous consent of the people. In one of his plays, he represents the Athenians under the allegorical character of an old man incapable of managing his own affairs, and directed in every thing by one of his slaves. In another, he reproaches them for the injustice of which they were often guilty as judges; and on many occasions upbraids them with continuing the Peloponnesian war, though they knew its tendency to weaken and ruin the state.

Pericles and Demosthenes often condemned the indolence and effeminacy of the Athenians; but with much art contrived to soften the severity of their censure by mixing with it a portion of praise. Aristophanes alone employs no disguise in exhibiting all the inconsistency and folly which they often displayed, and seems totally regardless of incurring their displeasure.

It appears surprising how a people so fond of adulation as the Athenians tamely submitted to be upbraided by a man whom they paid for contributing to their amusement: but they were charmed with the exquisite elegance of his diction; they admired the wit with which he exposed their defects;

and in consideration of the pleasure afforded by his compositions, excused the uncommon boldness which they displayed. It would have been well for the Athenians, if, while they heard with indulgence the comedies of Aristophanes, they had profited by the many lessons which he gave them. In politics, his judgment appears to have been penetrating as well as sound; and the King of Persia was wont to say, that if the Athenians had the wisdom to be guided by his counsels, they would soon become the masters of Greece.

The poignant satire of Aristophanes was directed against individuals still more frequently than against the people of Athens. If any citizen happened to displease him, he was accustomed to exhibit him under his real name upon the stage; and, by bringing under the view of the spectators all the parts of his conduct which admitted of an unfavourable construction, endeavoured to render him the object of their ridicule or indignation. No description of citizens was exempted from these attacks of Aristophanes. Pericles, Lamachus, Alcibiades, and almost every man of rank or eminence in the state, was occasionally exposed to his satire. Cleon, a person of profligate manners, who after the death of Pericles became the favourite orator at Athens, had made an unsuccessful attempt to show that Aristophanes was not entitled to the character of an Athenian citizen. The poet, who did not soon forgive any personal injury, wished to take vengeance on Cleon, and composed a comedy, the whole of which was intended to satirize his conduct. Cleon being at that time the most powerful citizen in Athens, no actor would venture to perform under his name, nor would any artist dare to make a mask which resembled him. Aristophanes himself felt no such fear; and having daubed his face with the lees of wine, mounted the stage in person, and in glowing colours exhibited the baseness and corruption of this worthless demagogue. Such a species of composition, in which every citizen might without mercy be exposed to the ridicule of his countrymen, could not have been tolerated in any state, where attention was paid to the distinction of ranks; but at Athens it was received with unbounded applause. In vain did Cleon and the other Athenians of rank complain of the insolence of Aristophanes, and demand that he should be punished. The people, who were always jealous of the power or eminence of their fellow-citizens, felt no regret at any mortification of their vanity, and thought that while watched by so vigilant and penetrating an inspector, they could have no opportunity of executing any design against the liberty of the state.

Horace seems to have regarded the unbounded licence assumed by the authors of the ancient comedy as favourable to the virtue of their fellow-citizens:

> Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetæ,
> Atque alii, quorum comœdia prisca virorum est,
> Si quis erat dignus describi quod malus aut fur,
> Quod mœchus foret aut sicarius aut alioquin
> Famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.
>
> SERM. LIB. i, SAT. iv, V. 1—7.

It cannot be denied that many of the vices, which, though highly destructive of the happiness of society cannot be brought under the cognizance of the civil magistrate, might in some degree be prevented by the fear of ridicule; but before so formidable a weapon be put into the hands of any individual, before he be allowed to erect himself into a censor of the manners of his fellow-citizens, we must be assured that he is free from prejudice or passion, and will direct his ridicule only against those vices or follies which deserve it. To this praise, Aristophanes was in no wise entitled. Besides his unfair exhibition of the conduct of Pericles, the whole of his comedy of the Clouds was intended to depreciate Socrates in the estimation of the Athenians, and to represent him as alike regardless of religion, and devoid of every principle of honour and integrity.

Socrates treated the satire of Aristophanes with the contempt which it deserved. He was present during its performance; and to satisfy the curiosity of the strangers who wished to see the object of the ridicule of the poet, stood during the whole time of the representation. Notwithstanding this dignified conduct of Socrates, the comedy of the Clouds was attended with very pernicious effects. It gave the Athenians an unfavourable impression of the character of that admirable philosopher; and though not to be considered as the cause of his death, since it was written twenty-three years before his trial, yet it prejudiced the people against a man, who of all others was the most qualified to inspire them with the love of virtue, and prepared them for listening to the accusations afterwards brought forward against him.

There was no class of men in Athens against whom the satire of Aristophanes was more frequently directed than the tragic poets. Envying their eminence, he seized every opportunity of exposing them to ridicule, and of lessening the admiration in which they were generally held. With this intention, he frequently introduced into his scenes some of the finest passages of their tragedies; but put them into the mouths of such fantastical characters, and caused them to be spoken on such occasions, as rendered them irresistibly ludicrous. The Athenians, who could repeat all the most beautiful lines of their tragic poets, were amused with the ridiculous appearance which they exhibited in the comedies of Aristophanes, and often laughed at the very expressions from which they themselves had once felt an opposite emotion.

It was not merely by these parodies that Aristophanes entertained the people at the expense of the tragic poets. If on any occasion they had inadvertently expressed a sentiment inconsistent with virtue, or had introduced a description deficient in taste, Aristophanes never failed to bring forward such passages on the stage, and to place them in the light most fitted to excite the displeasure of the people. The severity, with which Aristophanes was wont to expose the errors of the tragic poets, contributed to the perfection of their compositions. Every sentiment and expression was weighed with care previously to being submitted to the review of so formidable a judge; and consequently much of the elegance and correctness, which distinguish the writings of Sophocles and Euripides, may be ascribed to their dread of the ridicule of Aristophanes.

In the comedies of this poet, nothing appears more surprising than the colours in which he often exhibits the gods. Many of the dialogues of Lucian were intended to ridicule the absurd conceptions which the heathens had formed of their divinities; yet even in them the gods are seldom represented in so ludicrous a point of view as in the writings of Aristophanes. In one of his comedies, the birds are supposed to have built a city in the air; and by intercepting the smoke of the sacrifices which formed the chief subsistence of the gods, had reduced them to extreme distress. Jupiter being in the utmost alarm lest all the divinities should perish through famine, sends three of them as ambassadors to the birds with an offer of any conditions which they chose to demand, if they would allow the smoke of the victims to ascend in the same manner as before. Hercules, one of the ambassadors, is so much delighted with the abundance of food which he finds in the city of the birds, that he is willing to abandon heaven and become their slave, if they will allow him to reside with them. Mercury is exhibited in a light no less undignified; and there is hardly one of the gods whom, somewhere or other, Aristophanes does not render an object of ridicule. There is no doubt that many of the Athenians did not entertain the common opinions with respect to the gods; but it appears extraordinary that any people should allow the religion of their country to be ridiculed in public, and even in exhibitions represented at the expense of the state. It has been said that the Athenians excused the impiety of Aristophanes in consideration of the amusement which they derived from it. On other occasions, however, they showed no such indifference about religion. They often boasted of being the most religious nation in Greece. They condemned Diagoras, Alcibiades, Prodicus, and Socrates, in consequence of supposing them to have denied the existence of the gods of their country, and assuredly would have acted in the same manner towards Aristophanes, had they viewed his conduct in a similar light. To account for this apparent inconsistency, it has been supposed, with much appearance of truth, that at Athens the national religion was different from the mythology of the poets; and that while Aristophanes ridiculed the deities of Hesiod and Homer, he guarded against any violation of the respect which he owed to the gods of his country.*

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* This observation has been made by Brumoy in his Theatre des Grecs; and also occurs in the "Athenian Letters," a work of great merit composed by the late Lord Hardwicke, his brother Mr. C. York, and a few of their literary friends, but not published till many years after it was written.

In the same manner as in tragedy, a chorus was always an appendage of the old comedy, and, in the opinion of the Greeks, added to the splendour and interest of the exhibition. In Aristophanes, the songs of the chorus are sometimes serious, when in elegance and sublimity they are not inferior to any production of the tragic poets; but generally they are ludicrous, and convey a satire still more bitter than is expressed in the dialogue.*

In this form the old comedy continued to be composed and represented at Athens till the conclusion of the Peloponnesian war. The thirty tyrants, who at that period got possession of the supreme power in Attica, were afraid lest they themselves might become the objects of the ridicule of the comic poets, and published an edict enjoining, that in future no person should be exhibited by name on the Athenian stage. After the restoration of the democracy, the poets, while in appearance they complied with this regulation, soon devised a mode of gratifying the people by personal satire, and in what was called the middle comedy, introduced such exact imitations of the appearance, manners, and modes of thinking of the persons whom they wished to exhibit, that though the names were fictitious, the audience at once discovered to whom they referred. The middle comedy then did not materially differ from the old, and yet, inconsistent as such compositions may appear with the taste and manners of a polished people, it is not fifty years since a similar exhibition was applauded on the English stage: Almost all the farces of Mr. Foote related to incidents at that time known to the inhabitants of London, and his astonishing powers of mimicry enabled him to point out the persons, to whom he alluded, far more clearly than the dresses and masks of Aristophanes.

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* In the old comedy, the characters composing the chorus are often fantastical. In one play, they are clouds, in another wasps, in another birds, and in another frogs; the wasps being intended to represent the irascible temper of the Athenian judges; the clouds representing the vain and empty speculations of the Greek philosophers; and the frogs a tribe of contemptible poets employed in singing the praises of Bacchus. When the chorus was of this fantastical kind, it seems to have been represented partly by painted pieces of wood, and partly by men disguised in some resemblance of the animals or clouds of which it was composed.

Before marching into Persia, Alexander the Great forbade all personal allusions on any Grecian stage. From this time, the chorus ceased to be employed in the Athenian comedy, and poets began to paint general representations of character, and to direct their ridicule not against persons but vices. In this species of composition, which obtained the name of the new comedy, Menander rose to distinguished eminence. Many of the ancient writers speak with rapture of his intimate knowledge of the human heart, of the interest and appearance of real life which he has infused into his dialogue, and of the inimitable graces of his manner of expression. "His compositions," says Plutarch, whose admiration of Menander has made him adopt a style very different from what he commonly employs—"His compositions are like a meadow embellished with flowers, and watered by the most limpid streams, where we breathe a purer air, and where every object conspires to delight the imagination." Of eighty comedies composed by Menander, not one has descended to modern times; a loss which every admirer of elegant literature has reason to regret. The comedies of Terence are translations or imitations of those of Menander; but in the opinion of Julius Cæsar, the delicacy and correctness of whose taste no one will deny, they are far inferior in comic effect to the original. Cæsar, in some lines of his which happen to be extant says,

Tu quoque, tu in summis, O Dimidiate Menander,
Lenibus atque utinam scriptis adjuncta foret vis

Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret honore
Cum Græcis, neque in hac despectus parte jaceres:
Unum hoc maceror et doleo tibi deesse, Terenti.

If, however, the comedies of Terence, which every man of taste reads with delight, be such imperfect copies of those of the Grecian poet, what must have been the charm of the original compositions of Menander!

⁂ Those who wish to obtain complete information respecting the Grecian Comedy will peruse the plays of Aristophanes, and may consult the following treatises in Gronov. Thes. Gr. Ant. tom. viii; J. C. Scalig. de Comœd. et Trag.; Gyrald. de Comœd.; Casal. de Trag. et Comœd.; and Donat. de Trag. et Comœd. The remains of Menander, which have been collected by the industry of learned men, afford examples of the justness of his sentiments, and elegance of his expression; but convey no idea of the intrigue of any of his comedies.

ESSAY XVII.

ON THE ATHENIAN CALENDAR.

Importance of stated divisions of time in transacting the business of life. Motions of the heavenly bodies form the most accurate measures of time. In Greece, these were long imperfectly understood. Variations in the length of the Grecian year. Cycle introduced by Meton. It is improbable that so perfect a calendar was invented among a people ignorant of physical science and astronomy. Grecian months were always lunar. Time of the commencement of the Athenian year. The division of the day into hours was late before it was adopted in Greece. κλεψυδρα.

FROM the earliest periods of society, men have felt the necessity of forming certain stated divisions of time, without which they could keep no record of past transactions, nor preserve any regularity in conducting the common business of life. The motions of the heavenly bodies, being the most constant and uniform with which we are acquainted, have in every age been employed as measures of time; and consequently the perfection of the calendar of a people will be proportioned to the accuracy with which these motions have been ascertained.

Next to that daily revolution which the heavens appear to make round the earth, the motions of the moon are the most simple, and lie most open to our observation. In the space of about twenty-nine days and a half, that body, after assuming a variety of different forms, returns to the same state in which it had appeared at the commencement of this period. Some ages before the Trojan war, this circumstance had been observed by the Greeks, and gave rise to the division of time into months. It is obvious, however, that there is another measure of time far more important than that founded on the motion of the moon. Besides the daily circuit apparently made about the earth by the sun, in the course of a year that great luminary seems to revolve round it in a different direction, and by this motion gives rise to the vicissitudes of the seasons and the changes in the length of the night and the day. To those engaged in agriculture or navigation, the knowledge of the precise period of this revolution is most important; but cannot be attained without much accuracy and extent of observation. The year first known to the Greeks was that to which astronomers have given the name of lunar, and consisted of 354 days. They had observed that during twelve lunations or revolutions of the moon, there was a complete succession of the seasons, and thence concluded that this period exactly corresponded with that of the revolution of the sun. They soon, however, discovered their mistake. The lunar year is about eleven days less than the solar, or real time during which the sun makes his annual circuit round the earth; and consequently, in seventeen years, the order of their months was completely inverted, and festivals and sacrifices intended to take place in summer occurred in the middle of winter. Several attempts to guard against this inconveniency having been unsuccessful, Meton, an astronomer who flourished during the Peloponnesian war, gave a new and far more perfect form to the Athenian calendar.

According to his proposal, an addition of seven months was made to every nineteen years by inserting an intercalary month at the end of the third, fifth, eighth, eleventh, thirteenth, sixteenth, and nineteenth year. These nineteen lunar years and seven months, or 235 lunations, contain exactly the same number of days as nineteen revolutions of the sun; and consequently at the end of this cycle, the sun and moon were in the same relative position as at its commencement. This calendar of Meton was regarded with much admiration by the Athenians, and appeared to be contrived with so much skill, that it was universally adopted throughout Greece. It being afterwards discovered that he had committed an error, which in seventy or eighty years would amount to a day, this mistake was in a great measure rectified by a cycle of seventy-six years contrived by the astronomer Calippus, and still more completely in one of double that time invented by the celebrated Hipparchus.

There is the strongest reason to believe, that neither Meton, nor any of the Greeks, was the author of the corrections which he made in the Grecian calendar. In the productions of genius and taste, the Athenians have deservedly attained unrivalled fame; but in the discussion of those subjects, where every conclusion ought to rest on observation and experiment, they have not been equally successful. Perhaps the uncommon acuteness of this people contributed to retard their progress in science. Unwilling to submit to the labour of deep and continued investigation, they contented themselves with framing ingenious theories to account for the phenomena around them; and, provided these theories were plausible, felt little solicitude about the foundation on which they were built. Some enthusiastic admirers of the Greeks have indeed dwelt on their profound knowledge in astronomy, and have represented all the modern discoveries in that science, as merely illustrations of ideas first suggested by the philosophers of Greece. It is certainly true, that a Syracusan of the name of Nicetas was accustomed to teach that the sun and stars were at rest, and that the earth, by moving round its axis, occasioned all the appearances which we observe in the heavens; but the opinion of Nicetas in no degree detracts from the merit of the modern philosophers who have made this principle the basis of their system of astronomy. In their writings it is supported by the clearest induction; and every person who understands the reasoning employed to support it, must be convinced of its truth. In the case of Nicetas, on the contrary, it was merely the reverie of an ingenious man, assumed without evidence, and rejected by Aristotle and other philosophers of antiquity, because supported by no argument on which they could rest their belief. The astronomical knowledge, of which the Greeks were really possessed, seems to have been very imperfect. Even after the age of Meton, they imagined that the sun was only nine times the size of the moon, and till the return of Plato and Eudoxus from Egypt, were totally unacquainted with the proper motion of any of the planets. In speaking of an eclipse of the sun, Herodotus, a writer of genius and observation, shows himself totally ignorant of the cause by which it was occasioned; and at so late a period as the expedition of the Athenians to the island of Sicily, an eclipse of the moon was regarded with so much terror that it prevented the army of Nicias from embarking on its return to Athens, and ultimately proved the cause of its destruction. It is not probable that a calendar, approaching so near to perfection as that of Meton, could have been formed among a people thus ignorant of the first principles of astronomy; and accordingly, both in ancient and modern times, little doubt has been entertained that he borrowed it either from the Egyptians or Chaldeans. In most attainments, these nations were unquestionably inferior to the Greeks; but many circumstances in their situation were peculiarly favourable to the improvement of astronomy. They lived under a sky almost constantly serene. Their attention to agriculture and commerce made them observe every change in the appearance of the heavens; and the discoveries resulting from this investigation, joined to the security of a mild and settled government, gradually led them to the study of science. A belief in judicial astrology probably contributed to their knowledge of astronomy. No opinion can be more groundless and absurd than that the position of the stars can in any degree influence the conduct of men; but such a persuasion affords a strong inducement to watch the motions of the heavenly bodies, and in the judgment of an eminent modern philosopher, occasioned many of the most important discoveries in astronomy. From these circumstances, and perhaps from others with which we are unacquainted, the Egyptians and Chaldeans long applied to this science with uncommon ardour and perseverance; and, notwithstanding the want of telescopes, and their imperfect acquaintance with arithmetic and mathematics, attained a surprising accuracy and extent of information. Many of the Grecian philosophers, conscious of their own ignorance of astronomy, travelled in search of knowledge into Egypt; and, like Meton, published discoveries with which they had there become acquainted, but they rarely had the candour to own the source whence these were derived.

From the time that Julius Cæsar reformed the Roman calendar, the months in all the countries of Europe have been solar; that is, have consisted of the number of days, which the sun employs in passing through the twelve different constellations, over which he appears to move in the course of a year. At Athens, on the contrary, the months were lunar, and always began at the new moon, and ended when it changed. The period from one change of the moon to another, being about twenty-nine days and a half, the Athenian months were made to consist alternately of thirty and twenty-nine days, the first being called πληρεις or full, and the second κοιλαι or hollow.*

Before the age of Meton the Greek calendar was so erroneous, and the months moved so often from one season to another, that it is hardly possible to discover the precise time of the year at which the events related by the ancient historians actually happened. In consequence of his corrections of the calendar, the Athenian year always began with the first new moon after the summer solstice, and the period to which any writer alludes, can be easily and exactly ascertained.*

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* The Athenians divided their months into three δεχημερα or decades of days. The first was μηνος ἱϛαμενου or αρχοντος, or decade of the beginning of the month; the second, μηνος μεσουντος, or that of the middle; and the third, μηνος φθινοντος, ληγοντος, or παυομενου, that of the ending or expiring month. The first day of the month was styled πρωτη ἱϛαμενου, or more frequently νεομηνια, because it was then new moon; the second, δευτερα ἱϛαμενου; and so on to the tenth day. The eleventh was called πρωτη μεσουντος, the twelfth δευτερα μεσουντος, and so on to the twentieth. In the third decade, the mode of reckoning was inverted, and the twenty-first was called δεκατη φθινοντος, the twenty-second ενατη φθινοντος, and so on to the thirtieth. Sometimes, however, the twenty-first was styled πρωτη επ' εικαδι, the first after the twentieth: the twenty second, δευτερα επ' εικαδι; and in a similar manner till the end of the month. The last day was more frequently called ενη και νεα, the old and the new, because one half of it belonged to the old, and the other to the new moon.

The appearance and disappearance of the sun have divided the day into light and darkness; but in transacting the common business of life men find much conveniency from its being formed into smaller divisions. It was long, however, before the Greeks were acquainted with any of the devices, by which this object has been accomplished. Homer seems to have known no division of the day except into morning, noon, and night; and long after he flourished, when the Athenians wished to specify any particular period of the day, they alluded to the time when the judges took their seats on the tribunal; when the husbandman unyoked his oxen; or when any similar event was wont to occur.

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* The following are the names of the Greek months, and the order in which they succeed each other:

1. 'Εκατομβαιων, a month of 30 days, generally corresponding to a few days in June and the greater part of July.—2. Μεταγειτνιων, 29 days.—3. Βοηδρομιων, 30 days.—4. Μαιμακτηριων, 29 days.—5. Πυανεψιων, 30 days.—6. Ανθεστηριων, 29 days.—7. Ποσειδεων, 30 days.—8. Γαμηλιων, 29 days.—9. Ελαφηβολιων, 30 days.—10. Μȣνυχιων, 29 days.—11. Θαργηλιων, 30 days.—12. Σκιῤῥοφοριαν, 29 days.

From a very early period, the Chaldeans employed sun-dials for the purpose of measuring time; but Anaximander, the disciple of Thales, is believed to have been the first who introduced the use of them into Greece. In the species of sun-dial with which he made his countrymen acquainted, the time from the rising to the setting of the sun was divided into twelve parts, always equal to one another, but varying in length according to the season of the year. At Athens, where after the time of Anaximander the sun-dial came to be in general use, it was formed by a pillar erected in the middle of a small inclosure; and the employment of one of the slaves in the house of a wealthy citizen consisted in going at short intervals to the nearest dial, and bringing back intelligence of the length of the shadow cast by the pillar. For many ages the Greek word *ὡρα* denoted merely the season of the year, and does not seem to have expressed what we call an hour till after the age of Xenophon and Plato. Before that period, the different divisions of the day had the name of *σημεια*, in allusion to the marks made by the shadow of the pillar on the surface of the inclosure. In dials of this description, the length of the shadow was the same at the hours equally distant from mid-day. Thus in one of them mentioned by an ancient author, the length of the shadow for eleven and one, is said to have been twenty-nine feet; for ten and two, nineteen feet; for nine and three fifteen feet; for eight and four, twelve feet; for seven and five, ten feet; and for six, nine feet.* The Greeks seem to have made considerable improvements on the sun-dial, and are said to have invented one species of it which the richer Athenians were accustomed to carry about their persons.

A conical vessel called a κλεψυδρα, was used by the Athenians to measure the time, during which an orator might speak at the bar or in the assembly of the people. It had a small opening at the bottom, and contained such a quantity of water as emptied itself in the specified time. The orator was allowed to stop the running of the water, while examining evidence or reading any law to which he had occasion to allude.

A kind of water clock was used by some ancient nations; but does not seem to have been known to the Greeks. It was a cylindrical vessel perforated at the bottom, and containing as much water as ran thence in the space of a day. The inner part of the vessel was divided into twelve equal parts, at each of which was marked one of the hours; and, while the water subsided, an index, floating on its surface, pointed at all of them successively, and thus indicated the time of the day. Though ingenious, this invention was an inaccurate measurer of time, since the velocity of the motion of the water must have been affected by the state of the atmosphere, and still more by the quantity of water in the vessel. Clocks moved by weights or springs were not invented till the eighth century of the Christian æra; and it is not 150 years since they were brought to any perfection.

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* Pallad. ap. Script. Rei. Rust. tom. ii. p. 905. Voyage du Jeune Anacharse, tom. iii.

⁂ On the subject of this essay the reader may consult Theod. Gaz. de Mens. Att.; Haguel. Calend.; Lalamant. Dissert. Castell. de Mens. Att.; Sam. Petit. de Anno. Att.; Usser. de Mac. et As. Anno.; all of which treatises are in Gronov. Thes. Græc. Ant. tom. ix; Dodwel. de Cycl. Diss.; Petav. de Doctr. Temp.; Scalig. de Emend. Temp.; Salmas. Exerc. in Solin.; Casaub. in Athen. lib. vi; Potter's Arch. book ii; and Bailly, Hist. de l'Astr.

ESSAY XVIII.

ON THE GOVERNMENT AND MANNERS OF SOME OF THE LESS POWERFUL STATES OF GREECE.

Foundation of Thebes, and number of its inhabitants. Nature of its government. Conduct of Epaminondas after the battle of Leuctra. Short duration of the greatness of Thebes. Its fate after the battle of Chæronea. Character and manners of the Thebans. Situation of Corinth. Advantages with which it was attended. At an early period the Corinthians applied themselves to commerce. Their wealth rendered them luxurious and effeminate. Revolutions and government of Corinth. Soil and climate of Arcadia. Character of its inhabitants. Government under which they lived. Arcadians passionately fond of music. Opinion of Polybius respecting its effect on their manners. Reason why the neglect of it was unfavourable to the character of the Cynæthians, while an attention to it softened the manners of the rest of the Arcadians. Situation and soil of Achaia. Nature of the Achæan league. Though dissolved by Antipater, it was soon after renewed. Character and views of Aratus. Success attending his plan of forming Greece into one great community. Change produced by Cleomenes on the state of Sparta proves fatal to the design of Aratus. Effects of the assistance given to the Achæan league by Antigonus, King of Macedon. Arts by which the Romans obtained possession of Greece.

BŒOTIA, one of the largest of the districts of Greece, was about seventy miles in length, and nearly as much in breadth. It was populous and fertile, and abounded in those picturesque and romantic scenes which in ancient times were supposed to be the haunts of the Muses. The names of Helicon and Aganippe, of Hippocrene and Arethusa, are familiar to the admirers of classical poetry; and to the Greeks never failed to recall ideas, upon which they were wont to dwell with delight.

Thebes, by far the greatest city in Bœotia, was nearly five miles in circumference. The number of its citizens capable of bearing arms amounted to 24,000, and consequently exceeded that of Athens; but as at Thebes there were no theatrical amusements, no schools of philosophy, and no exertions of eloquence to allure the idle, the learned, or the curious, few strangers chose it as the place of their residence. It was built by Cadmus the Phœnician, 300 years before the Trojan war. From him the citadel was called Cadmea, and the buildings around it acquired the appellation of Thebes from the great city of that name in Ægypt, where he had spent many years of his life. The monarchical government established by Cadmus, subsisted at Thebes for some ages after his death. The misfortunes of Œdipus, King of Thebes, and of his sons Eteocles and Polynices, form a striking part of the history of the heroïc ages of Greece, and have furnished many subjects for the tragic muse. Like the other states of Greece, the Thebans were always jealous of the power of their kings; and, fifty-six years after the Trojan war, took advantage of the death of Xanthus without issue, and having abolished the regal power, substituted a republic in its stead. The government then established appears to have been nearly as democratical as that of Athens. By the constitution indeed, the senate ought to have had considerable influence over the resolutions of the public assembly; but the people paid little deference to their opinion, and generally exercised by themselves the whole of the executive, as well as the legislative power in the state. The Thebans were particularly jealous of their magistrates. No citizen of Thebes could under any pretext be successively reelected to the same office; and a general, who retained the command of an army for a single day after his right to it had ceased, became guilty of a capital crime. It is remarkable that Epaminondas, though alike superior to vanity and ambition, seems to have been the only Theban general who was guilty of this violation of the laws. At the time of his obtaining the victory at Leuctra, the year for which he was elected to command the Theban troops had nearly expired. He wished his countrymen to take advantage of the consternation of the Spartans by laying waste Laconia and by depriving them of Messenia; but knowing that the general appointed to succeed him was incapable of carrying these designs into execution, he himself led the Theban army towards Lacedæmon, and without any legal authority retained the command for several months after he ought to have resigned it. When he returned to Thebes, his enemies demanded that he should be condemned to suffer death: the law being explicit, Epaminondas did not plead in his defence, but requested that, after his death, the Thebans would inscribe upon his tomb the services, which by retaining the command of their forces he had been enabled to render to his country. His fellow-citizens, struck with his magnanimity, and conscious of the signal change, which by his wisdom and valour he had made in their situation, unanimously pronounced his acquittal, and even followed him with acclamations when he left the assembly. In this instance, the conduct of Epaminondas does not seem to deserve the praises which have sometimes been bestowed on it. Had the liberty or safety of his country been endangered by the power of Sparta, he might have been excusable for employing in her defence means, which on any other occasion could scarcely have been justified; but when, in consequence of the battle of Leuctra, the Spartans had ceased to be formidable to the other states of Greece, no scheme of aggrandizing Thebes ought to have induced him to infringe even the most unreasonable of her laws. A democracy is flourishing in proportion to the degree of reverence which the people feel for the laws; and consequently that man does not act the part of a virtuous citizen, who either by his authority or example contributes to lessen that sacred regard, in which, while unrepealed, all of them ought ever to be held.

In most of the states of Greece, the rich formed a party who grasped at every opportunity of securing to themselves the direction of public affairs. In Thebes this faction was particularly powerful, and on different occasions found means to subvert for a time the government of the people. To secure their authority, they at one period allowed the Spartans to take possession of the Cadmea; but in consequence of this act of treachery exposed themselves to such indignation, that Epaminondas and Pelopidas were enabled to crush their power so completely as to prevent them from ever recovering any influence in the state.

Thebes was only one of a number of states into which Bœotia was originally divided. An assembly, composed of deputies from each of these, annually regulated the affairs which concerned them in common; and elected eleven magistrates with the name of Bœotarchs, to whom was committed the execution of the measures on which they had determined. Thebes being by far the most powerful of these states, gradually extended her authority over the rest; and, before the invasion of Xerxes, had brought them under complete subjection. The Bœotian assembly continued to meet, but no measures were adopted, nor any magistrates elected, without the previous approbation of the Thebans. At the conclusion of the Persian war, during which the Thebans had joined in alliance with Xerxes, the Bœotians, disdaining to be subject to a people who had attempted to undermine the liberty of Greece, declared themselves independent, and for many years continued under the protection of Athens or of Sparta.

The Thebans, though uncommonly brave, and accustomed to prepare themselves for war by the constant practice of the athletic exercises, were late before they acquired any influence over the affairs of Greece. Distracted by perpetual factions among themselves, and often engaged in hostilities with the other states of Bœotia, they could rival neither the Athenians, who had united all the inhabitants of Attica, by giving them the same rights with themselves, nor the Spartans who from a very early period had held under subjection the whole both of Laconia and Messene. These powerful states, however, having enfeebled each other by their exertions during the Peloponnesian war, and Epaminondas being the greatest statesman and general of the age in which he lived, his countrymen, while directed by him, not only became sovereigns of the whole of Bœotia, but acquired a decided superiority over the other states of Greece. After the death of Epaminondas, none of the Thebans had sufficient ability to carry into execution the plans which he had formed for the aggrandizement and security of his country; yet still the number of her troops and the extent of her resources gave her considerable influence over the neighbouring states, and for several years enabled her to dispute with Athens the first rank among the Grecian republics. To none of the states of Greece was the event of the battle of Chæronea so fatal as to the Thebans. With the view of protecting themselves against a confederacy of some neighbouring states, they had formed an alliance with Philip, King of Macedon, and in return for his assistance, aided him even in those of his designs, which had for their object the subversion of the liberties of Greece. Being at length convinced by Demosthenes * of the baseness and folly of such a conduct, they joined in alliance with the Athenians, and furnished a considerable proportion of the army which fought against him at Chæronea. Philip was incensed by this desertion of the Thebans; and though after his victory he treated the Athenians with the utmost mildness, he banished many of the Thebans, and placed a garrison in the Cadmea. On the death of Philip, the citizens of Thebes despising the youth of Alexander, expelled from their citadel a part of this garrison, and put the rest to death. This conduct, joined to their former desertion of Philip, so exasperated Alexander, that he razed Thebes, and sold most of the inhabitants as slaves. During the reign of one of his successors, the city was rebuilt, but never attained to much splendour or extent.

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* On no occasion was there a more illustrious display of the irresistible eloquence of Demosthenes. The Thebans had long hated the Athenians, and were joined in the closest alliance with Philip: yet such was the effect produced on their minds by a single oration of Demosthenes, that they instantly dismissed the Macedonian ambassadors, and united with Athens in defence of the liberty and independence of Greece.

In general, the Thebans were not distinguished by eminence in the qualities of the mind, and are sometimes ridiculed by the Greek writers on account of the uncommon slowness of their apprehension. This defect Horace seems to have ascribed to the thick and moist air of Bœotia; for speaking of a very stupid man he says,

> "Crasso Bœotum in aëre natum jurares."

Climate, however, if it have any influence on the qualities of the mind, must act alike on every individual; nor in this case could Thebes have given birth to the sublime genius of Pindar, and the accomplished character of Epaminondas. It is more probable that the inattention of the Thebans to all the branches of literature and science blunted their capacity; and that in them ignorance and dulness of perception appeared the more remarkable, being contrasted with the uncommon acuteness, vivacity, and ingenuity of their neighbours the Athenians.

The citizens of Thebes were required to spend the greater part of their time in the gymnastic exercises, and from their infancy were accustomed to the study of music. In the absence of the many pursuits, which in a polished state of society have a tendency to humanize the tempers of men, this elegant amusement became important by its effect in softening the harshness and barbarity of manners, to which the usual occupations of the Thebans had a tendency to give rise. The inhabitants of Thebes paid little attention to arts or to commerce; and could not be elected to any office in the state, if for ten years they had been engaged in trade, or had practised any mechanical employment.

Corinth was situate on the isthmus or narrow neck of land which divides Peloponnesus from the exterior part of Greece. The few houses of which it originally consisted, were built on the declivity of a hill which terminated a ridge of mountains of considerable height, and as the number of inhabitants increased, were gradually extended into the adjoining plain. The hill was afterwards converted into a citadel; and by the advantage of its situation, joined to the fortifications with which it was surrounded, became the strongest fortress in Greece. Corinth, including its citadel, was about nine miles in circumference, and in the elegance and magnificence of its public buildings was little inferior to Athens itself. During a long period, the commerce of the Greeks was carried on entirely by land. The Corinthians, who possessed the only passage by which this intercourse could take place between Peloponnesus and the exterior part of Greece, were accustomed to impose a duty on all the commodities brought across the isthmus, and even so early as the time of Homer, had thence obtained considerable wealth.

After the Greeks had acquired some knowledge of navigation, the small extent of the territory of the Corinthians, joined to the barren and mountainous nature of the most of it, naturally led them to apply themselves to commerce; and in no situation could they have carried it on to greater advantage than at Corinth. By the Saronic gulf, which lay to the east of the isthmus, they had a communication with the fertile countries of Asia Minor and Phœnicia. By the Corinthian bay, situate to the west, they had access to Italy and Africa; and the narrowness of the isthmus, which in one place was little more than five miles broad, enabled them not only to convey their commodities from one sea to another, but with the assistance of machines to transport thither the light vessels which were then in use. Even the commerce carried on by the other states of Greece was advantageous to the Corinthians. The navigation round the cape of Malea, the extremity of Peloponnesus, was thought to be attended with so much danger, that the Greeks generally chose rather to import at the harbour of Corinth the commodities which they brought from Asia, and thence to convey them by land or along the coast to their destination. The duties which the Corinthians drew from the vessels that entered their ports, together with the very extensive commerce carried on by themselves, soon rendered them the richest of the nations of Greece. The wealth of which they thus came to be possessed, gave them a taste for expense. The most valuable pictures and statues were collected at an exorbitant price from the different states of Greece. Many costly articles of luxury were imported from various quarters of the world; and so extravagant was the style of their living, that, according to a proverb common in Greece,—it was not every man who could go to Corinth. In consequence of the extensive commerce of the Corinthians, they attained to a high degree of naval power. They invented vessels with different banks of oars, and were long distinguished, not more by the number of their ships, than by the uncommon skill with which they conducted them in battle. The wealth of the Corinthians was not favourable to their military character. The luxury to which it gave rise soon unfitted them for exertion, and plunged them into such a degree of voluptuousness, that before the time of

Philip of Macedon, they had become more effeminate than any of the states of Greece.

Corinth remained longer than most of the Greeks under the dominion of kings. Thirty years after the return of the Heraclidæ into Greece, Alethes, one of the descendants of Hercules, obtained possession of the sovereignty; and his posterity retained it for upwards of 400 years. At the end of this period, the Bacchiadæ, the most illustrious family in Corinth, found means to abolish monarchy and substitute an oligarchy in its stead. Having soon become contemptible by their luxury, Cypselus, a Corinthian of uncommon genius and address, gained over the people to his interest, and persuaded them to expel the Bacchiadæ, and entrust to him the sovereignty of the state. Cypselus having governed with mildness and ability, the Corinthians after his death voluntarily raised to the throne his son Periander. For a considerable time, this prince imitated the conduct of his father, and gained such a reputation by his prudence and clemency, that he was considered as one of the seven wise men of Greece. Being at length corrupted by prosperity, and afterwards soured by some domestic misfortunes, he so totally changed his conduct, as to become one of the most detestable of tyrants. Some time after his death, the

Corinthians were assisted by the Spartans to abolish the regal power, and established a constitution which from that time subsisted with little alteration till the subversion of the liberties of Greece.

At Corinth, as in the other Grecian republics, the assembly of the people possessed considerable power, but was in some degree under the control of an oligarchy composed of the principal citizens in the state. As far as can be learned from the scanty information left by the ancient writers respecting the government of Corinth, it seems to have been formed with wisdom. The nobles had sufficient influence to repress the turbulence and sedition which often prevailed in the more democratical of the states of Greece, and yet the people do not appear to have had reason to complain of their insolence or oppression.

By a law of Phidon, one of the legislators of Corinth, its citizens could not exceed a certain number. This circumstance, joined to the inconsiderable extent of its territory, obliged the Corinthians to found many different colonies. Corcyra and Syracuse were two of the earliest which they planted; and both of them attained greater power than Corinth herself ever possessed. At the close of the war between the republic of Rome and the Achæan league, Corinth was taken and destroyed by Mummius the Roman general. It was afterwards rebuilt and peopled by Julius Cæsar, and had even recovered some degree of splendour and wealth, when, together with the other cities of Greece, it was almost totally destroyed by Alaric the Goth.

The situation of the Arcadians was very different from that of the Corinthians. Except at one extremity, Arcadia had no communication with the sea, and even there the inhabitants were not accustomed to carry on commerce. Their country produced few articles for which there was any demand in the other states of Greece; and the inequality of its surface rendered the carriage of commodities so difficult and laborious, that the people seldom chose to import any thing not absolutely necessary for their subsistence. The situation of Arcadia was higher than that of any country in Greece. It consisted of almost a continued succession of precipices and mountains, and, except along the banks of its rivers, admitted of no kind of cultivation. The rest of it being adapted only for pasturage, most of the inhabitants were necessarily employed in the tending of flocks. Such a mode of life is far from being favourable to the improvement of the arts. In a pastoral state, men feel few wants and few desires. They spend most of their time in the air, and acquire a listlessness and inactivity which make them regard as a hardship every kind of exertion: yet so alluring to most men are indolence and freedom from restraint, that there is no manner of life to which those accustomed to it feel so strong an attachment. No situation could banish from an Arcadian the fondness for his country. Many years after having left it, he recollected with delight the picturesque and romantic scenes which in his youth he had been accustomed to frequent, and often sang of the groves which covered the rugged steeps of Mænalus and Lycæus, or shaded the beautiful streams of Alpheus and Ladon. Though it was always with regret that the Arcadians left their country, yet when called into the field, they were eminently distinguished by valour. In battle they were rarely conquered, and in the stratagems of war were not surpassed even by the Spartans. At the battle of Platææ, the Tegeans, a people of Arcadia, claimed the principal station in the Grecian army. It was granted to the Athenians as a reward for their exertions in defence of the liberty of Greece: but the Tegeans were allowed to have deserved this honourable distinction.

Like other pastoral nations, the Arcadians long continued to live in hamlets and villages. Being at length alarmed by the power of some neighbouring states, and the incursions often made into their country for the sake of plunder, they thought it necessary to have some places of strength on the frontiers of Laconia and Argolis, and by the union of a number of villages formed the cities of Mantinea and Tegea. After the battle of Leuctra, Epaminondas being desirous of reducing still further the power of Sparta, persuaded the Arcadians to make a stronger barrier against the Lacedæmonians, and assisted them in laying the foundation of Megalopolis. In a few years this city, built on the frontier of Laconia, became populous and splendid, and its inhabitants attained to considerable eminence in the arts.

Arcadia was long under the government of kings, and, after the abolition of the regal power, was divided into several independent republics. To prevent the jealousies and dissensions in which the different districts were often involved with each other, they agreed that 10,000 deputies chosen from all the states of Arcadia should meet at certain times in Megalopolis, with power to make peace or war, and to direct whatever concerned the welfare of the community. This constitution, established during the age of Epaminondas, seems to have answered the ends for which it was appointed, and continued in force till the Arcadians, with most of the other Grecian states, joined themselves to the league of Achaia.

In Arcadia, music was always an object of particular attention. By a law of one of the Arcadian legislators, every citizen was required to employ in the study of it a large portion of his time. At the end of every repast, those present were accustomed to sing in succession; and though an Arcadian was not expected to be acquainted with any other art or science, he would have incurred indelible disgrace by acknowledging himself to be ignorant of music. A celebrated historian of antiquity has ascribed to the study of music the probity, generosity, and humanity of the Arcadians; and in confirmation of his opinion, has mentioned that the Cynæthians, the only people of Arcadia by whom it was neglected, not only ceased to be distinguished by the amiable qualities of the other Arcadians, but soon became the most barbarous and profligate of all the inhabitants of Greece. However extraordinary this opinion of Polybius may appear to us, it cannot have been entirely destitute of foundation. Besides that he is a most faithful and judicious historian, he was himself an Arcadian; he was intimately acquainted with the manners and situation of his countrymen, and would have exposed himself to ridicule or disgrace, had he attributed their character to a cause which had no influence in its formation. Those writers who have endeavoured to account for the opinion of Polybius by supposing the Arcadian music to be more perfect than that of any modern nation, are totally mistaken. The music of the Arcadians was always uncommonly simple; and even in the most polished states of Greece, music in parts seems to have been unknown, and as an art had attained to far less perfection than in modern times. In the remainder of this essay, I shall attempt to point out the grounds upon which Polybius appears to have founded his opinon.

It is obvious that on those who live in a rude state of society, the effect of music cannot fail to be powerful. With the exception of the few who are destitute of musical ear, all men have a taste for concord and melody of sound, and many thence derive a high degree of enjoyment. To persons accustomed only to the irregular, tumultuous cry of joy or sorrow, how delightful would appear even the simplest musical air, and how warmly would they feel every emotion which it has a tendency to excite! The lyre of Orpheus had only four strings, and must have been a very imperfect instrument of music; yet, by the charms of its simple melody, he is allegorically said to have tamed the fiercest animals, or in plain words he united in society men who before had lived apart in the woods. The simplicity of the music of Orpheus and the Arcadians probably contributed to its influence on those who heard it. The more artificial compositions of modern times can be relished only by those who have some knowledge of the principles of music. The Grecian airs, on the contrary, were level to the capacity of all. Every ear perceived their beauty, and every heart felt the impression which they were intended to convey. In Arcadia, besides, music was inseparably connected with poetry; and the effects ascribed to it by Polybius were partly produced by the poetical compositions to which it was sung. The poems thus rendered familiar to the Arcadians were always favourable to virtue, and generally were odes in praise of those who had risen to distinction by some uncommon exertion of generosity or valour. The music to which these were sung, being always composed by the poet himself, accorded with the sentiments which they expressed, and was plaintive, animated, or elevated, in consistency with the feelings which he wished to excite. In Arcadia then, music and poetry combined in the cause of virtue, and being objects of study as well as sources of amusement to every class of citizens, could not fail to influence their character and conduct. From these observations it will be easy to discover the cause of the attention which the Arcadians were required to bestow on music. The air of Arcadia was often damp and cold, and, as far as climate influences the mind of man, had a tendency to give a harshness to the manners of its inhabitants. Literature and science were unknown; and pasturage, hunting, and war, formed their only occupations. The Arcadian legislators were aware of the violence and ferocity of character to which such a situation might give rise, and wisely enjoined the study of poetry and music as means of softening the manners of their countrymen.

Is it susprising then that the Arcadians, while daily employed in the recital of poems, the tendency of which was to form the heart to the love of what is great and amiable, and who accompanied these with a music according with such sentiments—is it surprising that they imbibed somewhat of the temper which these were calculated to inspire, or that the Cynæthians, who neglected these means of counteracting the disadvantages of their situation, sunk into all the vices which a barbarous state of society has a tendency to form?

After having treated of the government and situation of some of the most remarkable of the republics of Greece, I could wish to have entered into a similar inquiry respecting the other states of which it was composed; but this it is impossible to execute with any degree of accuracy. Some of these states were so inconsiderable as hardly ever to engage the attention of the Grecian writers, and even in the case of such as were more extensive, the historians of Greece, as of every other nation, have chosen rather to dwell on the wars and negotiations in which they were concerned, than on the more important articles of government and manners.*

All the Greeks lived under a republican form of government. In those connected with Sparta, it approached to an oligarchy, and in such as were protected by Athens, it was nearly democratical. With few exceptions, the Greeks were intelligent, brave, and skilful in war, passionately fond of liberty, jealous of the prosperity of any state but their own, unsteady in their resolutions, and alike fickle in their enmities and their friendships. In several of the Grecian states, such as Argos and Sicyon, the elegant arts of sculpture and painting were cultivated with success; but from causes which cannot now be explained, it was Athens alone which produced any considerable number of philosophers, orators, or poets.

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* Thessaly was one of the most extensive and fertile of the districts of Greece; but it was divided among a number of different states, which, having no sufficient bond of union, were often at variance, and rarely united to attain any object of importance to the community. The Thessalians could bring into the field 6,000 horse and 10,000 foot, and their cavalry was the best in Greece. None of the Greeks were thought to be so dissolute, turbulent, or licentious, as the people of Thessaly.

Though for the reasons mentioned above, any account of the less considerable of the Grecian republics would be imperfect and uninteresting, there is one of these states the history of which is too important to be omitted, and which is the more deserving of attention in consequence of the change which an adoption of its constitution produced in the situation of Greece.

Achaia, one of the districts of Peloponnesus, was situate on the sea coast between Elis and Sicyon, and extended about fifty miles in length and twenty-five in breadth. Like the other nations of Greece, the Achæans were once under the dominion of kings; but being disgusted with the tyranny of some of their princes, they abolished the regal authority, and substituted a popular government in its stead. Though Achaia was divided into twelve separate districts, the inhabitants of all of them were connected in the strictest manner with each other. They were governed by the same laws. They employed the same weights, coins, and measures; and none of them could form an alliance, or engage in war, without the consent of the nation. This assembly, which met twice a year, and was composed of an equal number of deputies from each of the different districts, received ambassadors, determined with respect to peace or war, and regulated every thing which could affect the welfare of the community. It annually made choice of two ϛρατηγοι or generals, who acted as chiefs of the confederacy; and to them, in conjunction with a council of ten, it delegated the charge of executing its resolutions, of preparing the business which was to come before it, and of summoning any extraordinary meeting of its members.

The soil of Achaia being rugged and barren, and its coasts being almost every where so rocky as to be inaccessible to ships, the Achæans could attain to wealth neither by agriculture nor commerce: but they appear to have been among the happiest of the States of Greece. Their poverty prevented the introduction of the luxury which proved fatal to the virtue of the more wealthy of the Greeks. The equality of their fortunes afforded no room for the jealousy and faction which in most of the Grecian states occasioned constant dissensions between the rich and the poor; and the smallness of their territory, and scantiness of their revenue precluded them from engaging in schemes of ambition or of conquest. For a long succession of years, accordingly, they not only lived in peace, but acquired such a reputation for moderation, wisdom, and probity, that the other states of Greece sometimes submitted to their decision the differences which subsisted between them.

Although the Achæans sent two thousand men to the battle of Chæronea, neither Philip nor Alexander resented this exertion in defence of the independence of Greece, and left them the enjoyment of their government and laws. No sooner, however, had Antipater obtained the administration of Macedon, than they shared in the oppression to which all the Greeks were then exposed. Their confederacy was dissolved, and every city was obliged to admit a tyrant appointed by the government of Macedon. In this situation the Achæans continued for nearly thirty years, when Patræ, Dymæ, Phæræ, and Tritæa, four of the districts of Achaia, took advantage of the confusion in which Macedon was then involved, and renewed a confederacy similar to that in which they had formerly been united. They were soon joined by some of the neighbouring cities; but still their military force was so inconsiderable that, far from attempting to enlarge their power, they could scarcely defend themselves against the incursions of the states around them. It was at this time that Aratus, one of the most illustrious statesmen to whom Greece ever gave birth, made himself known in Peloponnesus. Having rescued his country from the power of a tyrant, he persuaded the Sicyonians to join themselves to the league of Achaia, and by the unanimous suffrage of the Achæans, who, instead of two generals, now elected only one, was raised to the supreme executive power in the state. Having thus been entrusted with the superintendence of the Achæan league, Aratus formed the design of uniting in the same confederacy all the different states of Greece, conceiving this to be the most effectual mode of securing their independence. With an activity and ability peculiar to himself, he found means to banish from Athens and Corinth the Macedonian garrisons by which they were held in subjection. Many petty tyrants were driven from cities, which, under the protection of Macedon, they had long been enabled to oppress; and others, conscious that the same fate awaited them, voluntarily abdicated their authority, and allowed the districts which they governed to be united to the league of Achaia. No conduct could be more fair nor disinterested than that of Aratus and the Achæans. The cities which formed the original confederacy neither exercised nor claimed any superiority over Attica and the other districts by which it was afterwards joined. Every state was alike independent in its internal government; and all sent an equal number of deputies to the assembly of Achaia. This was the circumstance which formed the strength of the confederacy. The citizens of the different districts felt their own happiness and security to be inseparably connected with those of the community, and were willing to encounter every danger in each other's defence. The league having been joined by several states in the exterior part of Greece, and by all the inhabitants of Peloponnesus, except the Spartans, Aratus was indulging the hope of its soon including all who were of Grecian extraction, when it was nearly dissolved by an attack from a quarter whence with all his discernment he had not been apprehensive of danger.

For many years the Spartans had been gradually degenerating from the valour and magnanimity of their ancestors, and had become one of the most effeminate and contemptible of the nations of

Greece. Agis, a prince of the most amiable manners, who lived at the same time with Antipater, formed the design of restoring the institutions of Lycurgus, in the hope of reviving among his countrymen the manly and warlike character which they once had possessed. Though beloved and supported by the poorer class of citizens, Agis encountered the most violent opposition from the faction of the rich, who, having engrossed the whole property in the state, could not brook to descend to a level with the rest of their countrymen; and, after failing in the object which he wished to accomplish, lost his life in a sedition excited with a view to destroy him. Cleomenes, who not long after succeeded to the throne of Sparta, was not deterred by the fate of Agis. Possessed of greater vigour of mind than that unfortunate prince, he was not restrained by the humanity and integrity which regulated the conduct of Agis. By bribing the army to support him, by murdering the Ephori, and by other acts of equal atrocity, he acquired a complete ascendancy over the Spartans, and compelled them to consent to the measures which he wished them to adopt. All debts were cancelled; the whole property in the state was equally divided among the citizens; the gymnastic exercises became the sole occupation of the inhabitants of Sparta; and the slightest approach to luxury was punished with severity. The restoration of the laws of Lycurgus soon banished the effeminacy of the Spartans, and inspired them with the same fondness for war which had been felt by their ancestors. The troops of the Achæan league were more numerous than those of Sparta; but being composed partly of the effeminate inhabitants of Athens and Corinth, and partly of the Achæans, whose fondness for peace had prevented them from ever attaining to much eminence in war, they were far less formidable in the field. Cleomenes resolved to take advantage of this unwarlike character of the Achæan league, and having declared war against the states which composed it, defeated their army in several battles. Aratus being obliged to sue for peace, Cleomenes refused to grant it, unless he were acknowledged as head of the Achæan confederacy, and obtained the disposal of its troops and revenue. With these terms Aratus and the Achæans refused to comply. They knew Cleomenes to be an artful, ambitious, and unprincipled man; and suspected that, not satisfied with the sacrifice of their independence, he would soon attempt to reduce them under total subjection. Having resolved to form no alliance with Cleomenes, they found it necessary to devise some means of averting the ruin with which he threatened them; and the measure recommended by Aratus, though far from being desirable, was perhaps the best which in so difficult a situation they could have adopted.

Antigonus Doson, at that time King of Macedon, was a prince of considerable ability, and possessed a numerous and well disciplined army. To him Aratus, with the consent of the Achæans, applied for assistance against Cleomenes, and in return promised to put into his hands the citadel of Corinth, and to grant him the superintendence of the Achæan league. Hitherto Antigonus had taken no concern in the affairs of Greece, and had confined his attention to the improvement of the agriculture and trade of his kingdom: but the offer of Aratus held out to him so alluring an object of ambition, that he made no hesitation in accepting it, and marched with a powerful army into Greece. In a battle which Antigonus soon after fought against the Spartans, Cleomenes, though he acted the part of a consummate general, was unable to resist the superior force of the enemy; and, being totally defeated, left Greece, and spent the rest of his life in exile. Antigonus having died a short time after this victory, his successor, Philip II, retained possession of the citadel of Corinth; and not content with the moderate influence over the Achæan league exercised by his predecessor, poisoned Aratus, whom he considered as the chief obstacle to the accomplishment of his designs, and manifested a resolution of rendering himself sovereign of the whole of Greece. Notwithstanding their love of peace, the Achæans instantly took up arms, and under the conduct of Philopœmen, the last illustrious general whom Greece produced, maintained their independence, and had baffled all the schemes of Philip, even before the approach of a more formidable enemy obliged him to provide for his own defence. The Romans, who were then rising by rapid strides to the empire of the world, had long regarded Philip with jealousy and dislike. He was eminently skilful in war; his kingdom was extensive and flourishing; and he had not only made an alliance with the Carthaginians, but had proposed to lead an army into Italy to the assistance of Hannibal. Being implored by the Ætolians, a people of Greece, to protect them against Philip, the Romans willingly availed themselves of this pretext for sending an army against him into Macedon. By the unskilfulness of their generals, Philip was for some time able to oppose them; but soon after Quinctius

Flaminius obtained the command of the Roman army, the troops of that prince were defeated, and he himself was forced to submit to very mortifying conditions of peace.

The Romans being at this time engaged in too many foreign wars to attempt the conquest of Greece, Flaminius was directed to employ the most effectual means for attaching the Achæan league to the republic of Rome. With this intention he repaired to the Isthmian games; and having there declared that the Romans had determined to leave the confederacy in the full enjoyment of their liberty and laws, restored to them Corinth, and some other cities which had been occupied by garrisons of Philip. Philopœmen soon after succeeded in compelling the Spartans to join the league; and by his activity, prudence, and valour, rendered it still more powerful than before it was attacked by Cleomenes.

This prosperity of the Achæan league hastened its ruin. The Romans, afraid that a people animated by the spirit of liberty might diffuse the love of independence among the nations around them, soon began to employ against them the same arts by which they had already brought many states under subjection. On the conquest of Macedon by Paulus Æmilius, they accused many Achæan cities of having secretly assisted the Macedonians, and required that upwards of a thousand of the most respectable members of the league should answer for their conduct before the senate of Rome. Though innocent of the offence with which they were charged, these men were detained in Italy for nearly twenty years, and in the mean time the confederacy was deprived of the counsels of those most qualified to guard it from the dangers with which it was surrounded. Having in this manner secured themselves against the opposition of the ablest and most patriotic of the Achæans, the Romans had recourse to various means of fomenting the factions and dissensions which must often prevail in democracies, and held out offers of protection and assistance to such states as would abandon the confederacy, and declare themselves independent. When by these and many similar arts they had lessened the number of Achæan cities, and had weakened the connexion between them, they required that in future the league should comprehend only the inhabitants of the narrow district of Achaia, and that the other states which had joined it should detach themselves from the confederacy. In the situation of Greece, the members of the Achæan league would perhaps have acted prudently in obeying every command of the Romans; but being still animated by the spirit of liberty, they were indignant at the unworthy arts by which the Romans were preparing to enslave them, and took up arms in their defence. Though they fought with valour, they were unable to resist the disciplined and victorious troops of Rome. Corinth, the strongest of their fortresses, was taken; and not long after Greece, under the name of Achaia, was reduced into the form of a Roman province. Even then, however, Greece did not sink into total insignificance. "Græcia capta," says Horace, "ferum victorem cepit." The Romans imbibed a taste for the sciences and arts so assiduously cultivated by the Greeks. They felt some reverence for those by whose ancestors their favourite studies had been carried to perfection, and for a long period treated them with greater mildness than the inhabitants of any other conquered province.

⁂ On the subject of this essay, the reader may consult Laurenbergii Enarr. Gr. Ant.; and Ubbonis Emmii Vet. Græc. Ejusd. Tract. de Rep. Theb. de Rep. Corinth. et de

Rep. Achæor. in Gronov. Thes. Gr. Ant. tom. iv; Schoockii Ach. Vet. ibid. tom. v; Vindingii Hellen. ibid. tom. xi; Plutarch. in Vit. Arat. et Philopœm.; Polyb. Hist. lib. ii; Burney's Hist. of Music; and Voyage du Jeune Anach. tom. iii.

ESSAY XIX.

ON THE COLONIES OF GREECE.

Colonies of Greece. Causes of their being founded. Connexion which subsisted between them and the countries whence they came. Settlements of the Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor. Causes of the wealth and refinement to which the Ionians attained. They were the first among the Greeks who became distinguished by literature. Revolutions of Ionia, and period after which it formed a part of the Persian Empire.

THE inhabitants of Greece formed only a small part of those who were of Grecian extraction. The coasts of Italy, of the Euxine Sea, of the Hellespont, and of Asia, were peopled by colonies who long retained the language and manners of the Greeks, and boasted of their descent from that illustrious people. Some of these colonies were founded by men who chose rather to abandon their native country than live under the dominion of a tyrant; others by Greeks who had been driven from their possessions by the irruption of some barbarous tribe, or who wished to exchange a barren and inhospitable, for a rich and fertile soil; but most of them owed their origin to a peculiarity in the situation and manners of the Greeks. During the rude ages in which Greece sent forth most of her colonies, manufactures and commerce were almost unknown; and agriculture was so imperfectly understood, that the soil could support few besides those who were employed in its cultivation. Independently of this circumstance, the Greeks did not consider the prosperity of their country as at all dependant on the number of its inhabitants. They imagined that, when unusually populous, a state generally displayed an excessive fondness for war, and, becoming desirous of wealth as the only means of affording subsistence to all the members of the community, gradually lost the love of independence, and sunk into slavery, luxury, and vice. Under the influence of this impression, Lycurgus and most of the ancient legislators, fixed the number of individuals who in their respective states should be admitted to the character of citizens; and in the idea of a perfect government which Plato has sketched in his imaginary republic, he inculcates the necessity of preventing its population from exceeding the limits which he has assigned. At home then the Greeks could make no provision for that gradual increase of population which takes place in every state not desolated by pestilence or famine; and consequently were often under the necessity of sending colonies to those countries, where, from the defect of population, or the unwarlike character of the inhabitants, they could most easily find an establishment.

There generally subsisted a very intimate connexion between a colony and the state by which it was founded. The colonists regarded with veneration the country in which were the tombs of their ancestors, and the most ancient temples of their gods; and considered themselves as bearing the same relation to it, in which children stand to a parent. When she was attacked, they hastened to her assistance. On occasion of any danger which threatened them, they applied to her for counsel or aid, and often chose one of her citizens as their general to lead them against the enemy. In her religious solemnities, they sent deputations of their countrymen to add to the splendour of the festival; and treated with peculiar di stinction any of he citizens by whom they were visited. Though bound to pay every respect to the states whence they derived their origin, the Grecian colonies were in no degree under their subjection. The Romans, who planted colonies only in the countries which they had conquered, and who defended them with the same zeal as any part of the dominions of Rome, might require them to contribute their proportion of troops and of money for the support of the government by which they were protected. With the Grecian colonies the case was different. They had been left to choose for themselves the place of their settlement, and by their own efforts to expel the barbarous tribes by which it was inhabited; and if sometimes they derived assistance from the parent state, they never failed to repay it by the alacrity with which, when she was exposed to danger, they hastened to her relief. In the administration of their government, accordingly, the Greek colonies acted as independent states: they chose their own magistrates; they enacted their own laws; they paid no tribute; and considered any attempt of the parent state to infringe these rights, or to establish an authority on any other foundation than that of gratitude and affection, as dissolving all connexion between them. During many years, indeed, Athens exacted tribute from her colonies in Asia. This power, however, was not exercised for several hundred years after they were planted, and arose, not in consequence of any right which she derived from being the state whence they originally came, but from having extended her conquests over the whole of the part of Asia in which they were situated.

Of many of the Grecian colonies, but little mention is made by ancient historians; and to us the particulars recorded of others are far from being interesting: but one of them rose to such eminence, and had so powerful an influence on the affairs of Greece, as to be deserving of particular attention. From a very early period, the Greeks had formed the three great divisions of Dorians, Æolians, and Ionians, the Dorians and Æolians having sprung from the descendants or subjects of Dorus and Æolus, two sons; and the Ionians bearing the same relation to Ion, a grandson of Deucalion, King of Thessaly. During the Trojan war, a tribe of Ionians was in possession of Achaia. On the return of the Heraclidæ, which happened eighty years after the taking of Troy, this tribe was driven from Peloponnesus, and sought refuge in Attica. The Athenians having long been the chief branch of the Ionians, they were received with kindness; but as Attica, in consequence of their arrival, became more populous than was supposed to be consistent with the welfare of the state, Neleus and Androclus, two sons of the illustrious Codrus, who were dissatisfied with the abolition of the regal power at Athens, formed the design of making a settlement in some foreign country, and led into Asia Minor a numerous colony of Ionians and Athenians. Having expelled the barbarous nations who inhabited a part of its coast, they took possession of a territory about forty miles in breadth and 400 in length; and from the division of Greeks to which they belonged, gave it the name of Ionia. No country ever made more rapid progress in wealth and refinement. At a time when the inhabitants of the continent of Greece were plunged in ignorance and barbarity, and cultivated only the most necessary arts, the Ionians traded with most of the known quarters of the world; were distinguished by the skill to which they had attained in architecture and statuary, and had produced many of those compositions of genius which we still peruse with delight.

It has justly been observed by the author of the Wealth of Nations, that in no situation men sooner attain to opulence than in a colony. The distinctions of rank and fortune being there for some time unknown, they are not dispirited by the feeling of inequality. Every individual can obtain as much land as he is able to cultivate; and all are prompted to exertion by the assurance that superior industry and skill will enable him not only to acquire independence, but to rise above those around him. In the minds of the Ionians, there was a still stronger spring to activity and eminence. Before they left Greece, the love of liberty had taken root among their countrymen; and the sovereigns of the different states had either been banished, or were obliged to submit to the control of the assemblies of the people. Actuated by the same spirit, the Ionians soon shook off the authority of Neleus and Androclus; and in all the districts into which their country was divided, established a form of government more democratical than any which then subsisted in Greece. In such a situation, they had not merely the feeling of security. They acquired the vigour and energy of mind which are naturally formed under a free constitution, and which, in every pursuit in which men can engage, qualify them for rising to distinction.

During a long period, the inhabitants of the continent of Greece made little progress to refinement, in consequence of the continual dissensions and wars in which the different states were engaged with each other. The Ionians, on the contrary, considering themselves as members of the same family, always lived in harmony; and being long undisturbed by any foreign enemy, had abundant leisure to improve the advantages which they enjoyed. Even in the most barren country, such a people would have been prosperous. Is it surprising then, that in Ionia, the finest climate in the world, where by very moderate labour the soil produces every thing necessary for the subsistence of man, they became one of the most opulent and flourishing nations of antiquity? As Ionia abounds in safe and capacious harbours, the attention of its inhabitants was early called to navigation. They exchanged the surplus of their own productions for the commodities of Egypt and the other countries with which they traded; and by selling them in the upper parts of Asia, drew to themselves a considerable portion of the wealth of these fertile regions.

When men have acquired the necessaries and conveniences of life, they begin to apply to the cultivation of the fine arts; and, eager to decorate their houses, their temples, and their cities, spare no expense in the encouragement of those, by whose taste or skill they may be enabled to render these most elegant or splendid. The first attempts of the Ionian artists were rude; but their emulation of each other, joined to the desire of obtaining the public approbation, gradually rendered their efforts more successful; and at a period when Greece did not possess a single monument of the arts, there existed in Ionia many of those edifices the ruins of which still exhibit some of the most finished models of architecture ever produced by human ingenuity. In a country so flourishing as Ionia, many employ in the cultivation of literary genius that leisure, which wealth enables them to enjoy. This natural progress of the human mind happened to be accelerated in Ionia. Homer was born there; and from the early period at which he flourished, his poems continued to be familiar to his countrymen, and at all their festivals and public entertainments were sung by the rhapsodists, a class of men who made it their employment to recite his verses. An acquaintance with his inimitable productions inspired every individual with a fondness for poetry; and an attention to the wonderful art and genius which he has displayed, enabled even the earlier writers of Ionia to attain to uncommon correctness of taste and beauty of expression. The elegies of Simonides were admired by the Greeks, even when most distinguished by their eminence in literature; and in the different species of the ode, Alcæus and Anacreon reached a degree of perfection which Horace himself has been unable to surpass. Long after the age of these illustrious poets, the artists and authors of Ionia were allured to Athens by the rewards which Pericles held forth to the exertions of genius; and by the influence of their example, contributed to the surprising rapidity with which literature and the fine arts advanced to perfection at Athens.

Like the inhabitants of the continent of Greece, the Ionians were passionately fond of music; and besides the universal practice of it as an art, have shown the estimation in which they held it by that form of the Greek language which from them had the name of Ionic. In consequence of various changes in words with which every classical scholar is familiar, they smoothed the harshness of expression which often occurs in the Greek language as spoken by the Dorians and Æolians, and gave to their dialect a softness, a melody, and an elegance, which those unacquainted with it will find a difficulty to conceive.

For several ages after the settlement of the Greeks in Ionia, they remained completely independent, and were not attacked by any power superior to themselves. On the accession of Crœsus to the throne of Lydia, the wealth and fertility of Ionia made him desirous of annexing it to his dominions; and the greatness of his military force, joined to the effeminate and unwarlike character of its inhabitants, soon enabled him to render it tributary. When Cyrus was preparing to make war against Crœsus, he offered very favourable terms of alliance to the Ionians, if they would assist him against that prince: but such was the mildness with which they had been treated by Crœsus, that they felt no desire of regaining independence, and rejected the proposals of Cyrus. After his conquest of Lydia, they offered to become his allies; but then he disdained to accept their friendship; and having sent an army into Ionia, soon rendered it a part of the Persian empire. Cyrus and his successors allowed the Ionians to retain their religion, property, and laws, and contented themselves with requiring the service of a small number of troops in war, and an annual tribute, the amount of which bore no proportion to what might have been drawn from so opulent a province.

To secure the possession of Ionia, the Persian kings were accustomed to entrust the civil government of each of its cities to some one Ionian on whose fidelity they relied. This practice was injudicious. With the view of obtaining an independent authority, some of these men instigated their countrymen to take up arms against the Persians, while others availed themselves of their power and distance from the seat of government to acquire wealth by the plunder of their fellow-citizens.

During the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, the Ionians threw off their dependence on that prince; and being assisted by the Athenians, made an incursion into Lydia, and burned Sardis, the principal city of Asia Minor. They were soon brought anew under subjection to Darius; and during the eventful period of the Persian war, which originated from the aid granted them by the Athenians, were obliged to fight against their countrymen. After the battle of Mycale, they again shook off the Persian yoke; and at the glorious peace to which Cimon forced Artaxerxes to submit, were declared to be perpetually independent. A short time after being emancipated from the dominion of Persia, the Ionians were compelled to submit to the power of Athens, and found that the government of a democracy was far more oppressive than that of the Persians. At the conclusion of the Peloponnesian war, the fall of Athens restored them to liberty; but at the peace of Antalcidas, Ionia was acknowledged to be a part of the Persian empire, and from that time never recovered its independence. After the Ionians became opulent and luxurious, they do not seem to have been actuated by the same ardent love of liberty as the inhabitants of the continent of Greece. When Cyrus had made himself master of Lydia, Bias of Priene proposed that they should abandon Ionia, and enjoy independence in Sardinia; and during the Persian war, the Spartans offered them settlements in Greece. On both occasions, they refused to forsake their country, disregarding the possession of liberty, when only to be purchased by the sacrifice of luxury and wealth.

At a very early period, the Greeks made a number of settlements on the coast of Italy; and the Sybarites, one of these colonies, have often been celebrated as possessing a military force of 300,000 men, and as having carried luxury to an excess beyond what was ever known in the rich and effeminate countries of Asia. Whatever circumstances may have given rise to this opinion, there is not a doubt of its being unfounded.* Herodotus, who occasionally mentions Sybaris, and who flourished not long after the period assigned for its greatness, never alludes to its military power, nor to the effeminacy of its inhabitants; and as their country was small, and they carried on no foreign commerce, and had mines neither of gold nor silver, it was impossible that they could possess such an army, or that with the utmost fondness for pleasure they could to any great degree indulge themselves in luxury. Little is known with any certainty of the history of Sybaris. About the age of Solon, its citizens had attained to considerable power, and held in subjection twenty-five cities on the coast of Italy. The citizens having long been distracted by the same factions which prevailed in the states of Greece, the democratical party at length acquired a decided ascendency, and banished 500 of the principal inhabitants. Being displeased with the protection afforded to these exiles by the neighbouring state of Crotona, the Sybarites marched in a body against the Crotonians. In this expedition they were totally defeated; and the army of the enemy, having pursued them into their own territory, took Sybaris, and reduced to slavery, or put to flight, the whole of its inhabitants. For fifty-eight years the territory of Sybaris remained completely desolate. The Crotonians could not people it themselves, and would not allow any colony to settle in their neighbourhood. At the end of this period, the descendants of the ancient inhabitants, accompanied by a number of Thessalians and Athenians, found means to establish themselves in the country of Sybaris, and to build there a new city of the name of Thurium. The same dissensions, however, which had prevailed at Sybaris, soon broke out at Thurium, and its citizens never attained to any considerable degree of eminence or power.

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* Diodorus Siculus by whom these particulars have been related, is a credulous and inaccurate historian.

⁂ On the subject of this essay, the reader may consult Bougainville, Diss. sur les Metr. et Colon.; St. Croix, de l'Etat. des Col. des Anc. Peupl.; Herodot. Hist.; and Strabon. Geogr. pass.

ESSAY XX.

ON THE GOVERNMENT, MANNERS, AND RELIGION OF THE PERSIANS.

Rise and extent of the Persian empire. Means by which such extensive dominions were acquired. Power of the King absolute, and liable to abuse. Government of the provinces contrived with wisdom. Restraints on the authority of the satraps. Manner in which the Persians carried on war. Revenue of the Persian empire. Only a small proportion of it paid in money. Religion of Persia totally different from that of the Greeks. Of great antiquity, but reduced to a system and improved by Zoroaster. Account which it gives of the creation of the universe, and the mixture of good and evil in the present state of things. Cause of the reverence with which the Persians regarded the sun and every kind of fire. Office of the Magi. In consequence of the extent of their knowledge, the vulgar supposed them to possess some degree of supernatural power.

PERSIA properly so called, was a small mountainous district of Asia. Before the time of Cyrus the Great, the Persians seem to have been tributary to the Medes; but, under the conduct of that able and warlike prince, they rendered themselves independent, and subdued the powerful kingdoms of

Media, Lydia, and Babylon. It is not surprising that the arms of the Persians were so eminently successful. In consequence of the barrenness of their soil, they were strangers to luxury. From their youth they were almost perpetually employed in hunting or the exercises of war; and when led on by such a general as Cyrus, proved far superior to the inhabitants of the more fertile countries of Asia, who, besides being sunk in effeminacy, were strangers to discipline and the art of war. Another circumstance apparently unfavourable to the Persians became one of the chief causes of their success. The troops of the other nations of Asia were principally composed of cavalry. With the Persians the case was different. Their country being unfit for the rearing of horses, and the government being too poor to purchase them from any other quarter, the strength of their army always consisted of foot. It has justly been observed, however, that in every age the greatest victories have been gained by infantry. At the battle of Marathon, the Athenians had no horse; and the Romans, as well as the northern nations who overturned the Roman empire, made their conquests with armies, almost the whole of which fought on foot. Cavalry, even when trained with the utmost skill, is found to be incapable of resist-ing the firm and regular attack of a disciplined body of infantry; and when thrown into confusion, can rarely be brought back with any order into the field.

The dominions of Cyrus, when joined to Egypt, which was conquered by his son Cambyses, and to a part of India subdued by Darius, formed one of the most extensive empires recorded in history. Besides several tributary kingdoms left under the government of their own princes, the dominions of the Persian monarch extended about two thousand miles in length and nearly nine hundred in breadth, and comprehended many of the most populous and fertile countries in the world. The government of Persia was despotic. The property and the life of every individual in the empire were subject to the power of the sovereign. All who approached him prostrated themselves in his presence; addressed him as a superior being, and acknowledged themselves to be his slaves. When Gobryas, an Assyrian nobleman, joined Cyrus in his expedition against Babylon, he threw himself at the feet of that prince, and said to him, "*διδωμι σοι εμαυτον και συμμαχον και δȣλον.*"[*] This abject language was suitable to the manners of the Asiatics even before the foundation of the Persian empire, and appears to have been the style in which those even of the highest rank and eminence were expected to address their sovereign.

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[*] "I give myself up to you both as an ally and a slave."

Plato mentions that much attention was bestowed on the education of the Persian princes; and that the ablest and most respectable men in the state were employed, to instruct them in the knowledge of the most effectual means of promoting the happiness of their subjects, and to form their minds to the practice of virtue. On their accession to the throne, the effects of this education were greatly felt. Perpetually surrounded with flatterers who represented their will as the standard of right, and accustomed to consider millions of their fellow creatures as ready to execute every wish which they formed, they too often acquired such an insolence and impatience of contradiction as betrayed them into acts of the grossest injustice and oppression. Pytheus, a Lydian of immense wealth who had entertained Xerxes and the whole of his army on their march to Abydos, and to whom the king had promised to grant any thing which he chose to ask, ventured to request that the eldest of his five sons might be allowed to remain at home for the protection of his property. Far from gratifying this natural desire of the old man, Xerxes reproached him for presuming to wish, that one of his family should be exempted from a service in which he himself was engaged, and commanded the son to be put to death before the eyes of his father.

Though the caprice or cruelty of the sovereign sometimes proved fatal to the nobles or those employed about his person, the Persians in general were far from being victims of oppression. The internal administration of the state was conducted with consummate wisdom, and had probably been contrived by the comprehensive genius and liberal mind of Cyrus. The Persian empire was formed into twenty great divisions, and over each of them was appointed a satrap or governor, to whom was entrusted the supreme civil and military power within his province. Though extensive, the authority of the satraps was not uncontrolled. In every district the commanders of the cities and forts were nominated and removed by the king; and, being instructed to communicate to government any act of oppression committed by the satrap of the province, generally deterred him from any abuse of his power. To facilitate the conveyance of intelligence, couriers were stationed at small distances from each other, and were continually employed in carrying dispatches from all the different parts of the empire to the court of the sovereign. There can be no doubt that this practice suggested the idea of the modern invention of posts; but, as established by Cyrus, it was entirely a political institution, being intended neither for the convenience of individuals nor the improvement of commerce.

A restraint of a still more effectual kind was laid on the power of the satraps. Once every year, the sovereign himself, or some persons on whose fidelity he could depend, and who thence were called the eyes and ears of the prince, visited all the provinces of the empire, and made a minute inquiry into the situation of the people. If the inhabitants of a district were wealthy and industrious, the satrap was applauded, and an addition was generally made to the extent of his government. If, on the contrary, their number had diminished, if they neglected agriculture and the arts, or exhibited any marks of poverty or wretchedness, the satrap was concluded to have been guilty of negligence or oppression, and though accused of no crime, was immediately removed from his government. By this attention to the welfare of the people, and by the rewards bestowed on those individuals who distinguished themselves by their skill in agriculture and improvement in the arts, the industry and wealth of the Persians became superior to those of most of the nations of antiquity; and amidst the turbulence and factions which distracted the democratical states of Greece, its inhabitants often regarded with envy the tranquillity and security of the subjects of Persia.

From the time of Cyrus the Great, the Persian princes were most attentive that justice should be properly administered throughout their dominions. The judges whom they appointed were always men advanced in years, and distinguished by ability and virtue; and, when convicted of corruption or oppression, were publicly punished with severity. The Persians rarely inflicted the punishment of death; and in their judicial proceedings displayed an equity and humanity, not always to be found among the most civilized states of Greece.

During the life of Cyrus the Great, the Persians were far superior in the art of war to the other nations of Asia. Soon after his death, they seem to have adopted the manners of the countries which they conquered, and to have become no less effeminate and unwarlike than the inhabitants of Media and Babylon. The number of troops sent into the field by the successors of Cyrus was always immense; these princes supposing a numerous army to accord with the greatness and extent of their empire, and to be the most effectual means of ensuring success. The Persian armies were often attended by the wives and children of the soldiers. It was believed that in the event of a battle every individual would fight with greater courage while defending those for whose safety he was most solicitous; but the inconveniences of such a practice were far more than sufficient to counterbalance this advantage. It prevented the celerity of motion so important to the success of an army; it often occasioned a scarcity of provisions; and it generally gave rise to the same luxury in the camp to which the more wealthy of the Persians were accustomed at home.

At the age of twenty, every Persian was enrolled in the army of the king, and, from that period till his fiftieth year, could at any time be called out into the field. Soon after the death of Cyrus, cavalry formed the strength of the Persian army. The horses, as well as their riders, were completely covered with armour, a practice adopted by many nations of antiquity, but certainly injudicious. It retarded the speed of the horses; and when they happened to fall, made it hardly possible for them to rise from the ground. While the Persians fought against the Egyptians and Indians, nations still more effeminate than themselves, they continued to be successful; but when they turned their arms against the Greeks, a people animated by the vigour of mind which liberty inspires, and the smallness of whose military force obliged them to make various improvements in the art of war, the inferiority of the Persian mode of warfare became apparent. It was not merely at Marathon and Platææ, that the Persians were vanquished by the Greeks. In the heart of Asia, Xenophon, Agesilaus, and Alexander, defeated them in every battle which they fought, and showed the inefficacy of the number of an army when destitute of discipline and military skill.

During the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses, no fixed revenue was exacted for the service of the state. The different provinces sent voluntary contributions to the sovereign, and he demanded any additional sums which might be needed for the support of the government. Darius was aware of the disadvantage of this practice; and, with the view of correcting it, laid a statement of certain annual taxes before those, who had the best means of being acquainted with the productions and situation of the different provinces of the empire. They all declared them to be moderate; but so much was Darius afraid of oppressing his subjects, that he required only half the amount of what he had proposed. The tribute in money exacted from Ionia, Pamphylia, Lycia, and some contiguous districts, amounted to the very moderate sum of 400 talents, or 90,000*l.*; and there is reason to believe that all the provinces of the empire were treated with equal indulgence.

Besides a certain proportion of money, every country was required to supply the government with the articles which it produced in the greatest abundance. One furnished corn, another cattle, another horses; and Babylon alone was expected to support during four months of the year the whole army of Persia. It was by these taxes in kind that the Persian kings defrayed the ordinary expenses of the state. The revenue paid in money, which seems to have amounted to 4,000,000*l.* sterling, was generally formed into ingots, and deposited in the royal treasury, till some uncommon emergency required it for the service of government. This may account for the immense sums which, after the conquest of Persia, Alexander is said to have found in different parts of the empire.

The Persian religion had no resemblance to that of the Greeks. It appears to have subsisted in Persia for several ages before the reign of Cyrus; but after the death of Cambyses, one of the priests obtained possession of the throne by assuming the name of his brother Smerdis; and the discovery of his imposture excited such indignation throughout Persia, that most of the priests were banished or put to death, and in many of the provinces even the religion itself sunk into contempt. It was at this period that Zoroaster, a man of low birth, but uncommon genius and learning, formed the plan of restoring and improving the religion of his country, and of making it the means of his own aggrandizement. Having first appeared in Media, where many were still attached to the ancient religion, he assumed the character of a prophet, and pretended that he was sent by the Divinity to communicate the most important knowledge to his countrymen. To render himself the object of their reverence, he retired for a long time to a cave, and there lived like a man totally indifferent to the affairs of the world, and entirely occupied with the revelations of the Divine will with which he professed that he was occasionally favoured. After having published in Media the different articles of his religion, he removed to Bactria, at that time under the government of Hystaspes, the father of Darius. Hystaspes being a man of literature and science, was delighted with the extensive and profound erudition of Zoroaster; and as he still retained a predilection for the religion of his fathers, was pleased with any attempt to restore it, and still more with the many improvements on its doctrines made by Zoroaster. Encouraged by the number of proselytes, whom through the influence of Hystaspes he procured in Bactria, Zoroaster went to the court of Darius; and by his forcible eloquence and insinuating address made the king himself a convert to his religion, and persuaded him to enjoin his subjects to adopt it. From this period, it continued for many ages to be the national religion of Persia; and, though in a great degree supplanted by the imposture of Mahomet, it is still professed by a numerous sect in the East. Without attempting to distinguish between the ancient religion and the changes made in it by Zoroaster, I shall conclude this essay with a short account of those particulars respecting it which are most deserving of attention.

According to the Persian religion, then, there is one Supreme, All-perfect Being, who hath existed of himself from eternity, and who formed every thing which we behold. Under him are two inferior spirits; Oromasdes, the angel of light, and promoter of happiness and virtue; and Arimanes, the angel of darkness, and author of misery and vice. Between these two spirits there exists a perpetual warfare; and good or evil prevails in the world, according as the one or the other happens to be superior. This contest, however, is to continue only for a time. At the end of the present state of things, all who ever existed on earth are again to be raised to life; the conduct of every individual is to be judged by the Supreme Being, and while Oromasdes and his followers are to enjoy perpetual felicity, Arimanes and his associates are to be banished from the abodes of light, and to suffer for ever the punishment of their crimes.

The Persians regarded with reverence the sun and every kind of fire: the purity, activity, and brightness of fire having caused it to be considered as the most perfect emblem of the Divinity, and its presence being thought the best means of enlivening devotion. In all their supplications, accordingly, they stood before the fire of the temple, and turned their faces to the sun. The fire continually kept alive in their temples was considered as sacred. It had been kindled from fire which Zoroaster pretended to have brought down from heaven. It was fed by a particular kind of wood, and was supposed to be polluted even by the breath of those who approached it.*

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* It was for this reason that the Magi were required to have their mouths covered, when they went near the fire of any temple.

In Persia, the priests had the name of Magi. Besides watching over the sacred fire, they occasionally read to the people parts of the writings of Zoroaster, and addressed prayers to the Divinity in behalf of the king and for the welfare of their country. In every district of the Persian empire, some Magi of superior knowledge and experience were appointed to inspect the conduct of the inferior priests; and at Balch in Bactria, there resided an Archimagus, to whose jurisdiction all the priests were amenable, and whose commands they were bound to obey. The temple at Balch in which he officiated was regarded as peculiarly sacred; and every Persian thought, that once in the course of his life he was bound to visit it.

From the time of Zoroaster, the Magi continued for many ages to be distinguished by the accuracy and extent of their knowledge; and in consequence of this were not only held in reverence by the people, and often consulted by the King in affairs of state, but were visited by all who wished to attain to eminence in philosophy. Under the impression that they could not more effectually preserve the respect of the vulgar than by concealing their more important discoveries, the Magi were always unwilling to disclose them; and with the exception of the Persian kings, Themistocles appears to have been almost the only person, to whom, in consequence of the command of Xerxes, they communicated all the secrets of their philosophy. Being unable to account for the operations, which by their skill in science they were accustomed to perform, the vulgar supposed them to be possessed of supernatural powers; and thence the words, "*magic*" and "*magician*," derived from their name, came to be used in the sense in which they are now employed. While distinguished by real science, the Magi made no such pretensions; and were viewed in this light merely from the superiority, which an acquaintance with the principles of philosophy gives men, over those whose minds have not been enlightened by science.

⁂ On the subject of this essay the reader may consult Herodot. Hist.; Xenoph. Cyrop.; and Strab. Geogr. pass.; Plut. in Themist.; and Hyde de Relig. vet. Pers.

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